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A  
GENERAL BIOGRAPHY.  
OF  
BENGAL CELEBRITIES.

BOTH LIVING AND DEAD.

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BY  
RAM GOPAL SANYAL.  
AUTHOR OF THE LIFE OF LATE BABU KRISTO DAS TAL

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VOL. I.

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Calcutta.

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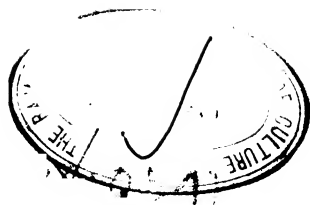
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DEDICATED  
TO THE SACRED MEMORY  
OF  
THE HON'BLE KRISTO DAS PAL  
WHO LOVED US SO DEARLY.





## PREFACE.

In publishing these biographies, the writer need hardly offer any apology. The Lives of the most eminent amongst his countrymen, whether living or dead, must always be a priceless treasure to the country. The struggles and triumphs of Hurish Chunder Mukherjea, the indomitable perseverance and the noble patience of Shyama Churn Sirkar, the eloquence of Ram Gopal Ghose and his devotion to the true interest of his country, not to speak of the achievements of those now living, form the brightest page in the annals of modern Bengal. The author is conscious of the imperfect character of his work, and of the defects in matter and manner from which the work suffers; but he can truly affirm that he has made an honest attempt, with what little success, it is not for him to say, to preserve in a durable form, the work of some of the greatest amongst his countrymen. The Lives of the living are to be found side by side with those of the dead, and this may seem to be an anomaly. But it is really not so, if the matter is somewhat carefully examined. There is no record to speak of, of the lives of Hurish chunder Mukherjea, Shyama Churn Sirkar, Degumber Mitter, and Ram Gopal Ghose. The author felt that before he wrote of the living, he owed an, yet unredeemed duty to the dead. In the interest of biography and for the sake of preserving in a durable form, the work of such men as Raja Degumber Mitter, Shyama Churn Sirkar, Hurish Chunder Mukherjea, and Ram Gopal Ghose, he has ventured to include in one work the Lives of the dead with those of the living. It is hardly necessary for him, to offer an explanation as to why it should be considered, desirable to publish so early, the Lives of living celebrities, many of whom are still in the vigour of life, and manhood, and who, we trust, have yet many long years of usefulness before them. The writer may refer to the Lives



of eminent Englishmen still living for a precedent. But the circumstances of this country furnish even a stronger reason for such a course than what may be said to exist in the conditions of England or of any other country. In publishing the life of Kristo Das Pal, the writer was confronted with difficulties of serious magnitude which would not have occurred, if he had undertaken the task during the life-time of that illustrious journalist. Points which are now obscure in the biography of Kristo Das Pal might thus have been cleared up, and a fresh light thrown upon the life of that great man. It is obviously the dictate of prudent and sound sense to prevent such obscurity and confusion, in connexion with the Lives of those eminent men who are treading in the foot-steps of that illustrious Patriot, and are endeavouring to serve their country, according to the measure of their abilities and of their opportunities. This work therefore is not to be viewed in the light of a complete biography in respect of the eminent living men concerned. It is much less pretentious in its character. It seeks to throw into shape, not always perhaps, the most consistent, or the most harmonious, the leading details of their lives. It will thus help the future biographer in the performance of his task, and obviate difficulties which otherwise would have been insurmountable. This is the only claim which may rightly be preferred on behalf of this work.

It will occur to the reader that there are some important omissions in the list of eminent living celebrities. But it is necessary to point out that this is only the first part of the work, and as soon as the necessary materials will be forthcoming, the omissions will be supplied. With these remarks, the writer throws himself on the indulgence of the reader.

CALCUTTA,  
11th Nov. 1889. }

RAM GOPAL SANYAL.

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# RAJA DEGUMBUR MITTER C. S. I.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HIS BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EARLY LIFE.

OF the brilliant galaxy of educated and self-made men of the pre-University period of English education in Bengal, Raja Degumber was one. He, by his own exertions and thorough honesty of purpose, coupled with patience and perseverance, rose from the rank of middle-class men to the exalted position of one of the premier Zemindars of Bengal. An account of the life of this architect of his own fortune cannot, therefore, fail to be an interesting and profitable study, not only to this generation, but as well to those yet unborn.

Babu Degumber (afterwards Raja) was born at Konenagpur, in the district of Hughly in 1817, of a very respectable and ancient Kyastha family known as the Mundira Bati Mitters. His father Babu Shib Churn Mitter was, a godown Sirkar under Messrs. Gisburn and Co., and had two sons of whom Degumber was the eldest.

His grand-father Babu Ram Chunder Mitter was also under the employ of a Calcutta Mercantile Firm, and earned a decent livelihood, and a great part of what the father and grand-father earned, was spent in charity and religious performances. In those days, orthodox Hindoos had no inordinate greed of gain, and never thought of making any savings from their small incomes for the benefit of their posterity. So that, when Babu Degumber was born, he inherited

not a very large fortune from his ancestors who were in tolerably good circumstances, and in the enjoyment of competence only. The immense fortune and the vast landed properties which Babu Degumber afterwards possessed, were the hard-earned, and not the less deserved, fruits of his own labour, and not the rich heritage obtained from his ancestors. How he came to acquire this property, how poor Degumber became a rich man, and how, throughout his life, he made an excellent use of his money for the benefit of his countrymen, we shall describe hereafter.

Degumber was fortunate enough in receiving a good education in his youth. His father used to reside in a lodging somewhere in Raja Naba Krishna's Street at Sova Bazar, and boy Degumber was educated in a *patshala*, and at the age of twelve, took his admission into the school kept by David Hare, the father of English Education in Bengal. He then joined the Hindoo College, and having passed the Senior Scholarship Examination, he left it in search of employment to provide for his family, then consisting of his old father, mother, and his wife, before he was twenty. In 1834 he served as an English teacher of the Nizamut School at Moorshidabad, where in later life he came to play an important part not only as a tutor and Manager of the vast Estates of Raja Kishennath, the husband of the illustrious Moharanee Surnomoyee of Kashim Bazar at Berhampore, but also as a silk-manufacturer and merchant of great enterprize and pluck. The school-mastership in the Nizamut School was not to his liking, and so he left it, and got an employment under the Magistrate and Collector of Rajshaye as head clerk of the Collectorate there, on a salary of Rs. 80 or 100 per mensem. It is said by his few surviving friends that he held the post for a short period of six months only, but it is now impossible to determine with any degree of accuracy why he gave up the appointment. A

correspondent signed "B" wrote to the *Indian Mirror* on the 29th April 1879, immediately after his death, that Babu Degumber having given up the head clerkship at Rajshaye, came back to Moorshidabad, and "was appointed a Tehsildar of the Government *Khas Mahal*, Hudaramdashpur, under the then Collector, Mr. Robert Torrens. While he held this post, he fell into a scrape. One of his subordinates, an *amin*, made some alterations, or (*Biruper*) in the description of lands in a measurement *Chita*, i. e. some *bastu* or (habitable) lands were described as *garas* (unculturable holes)." He was prosecuted for this offence of his subordinate, but was honorably acquitted. He therefore gave up the appointment in disgust. The correspondent says that at this time "he was in great distress and lived with the late Babu Ganga Churn Sen, who was then head clerk of the Moorshidabad Collectorate. In 1838, he served as a clerk for a short time in the Native Infantry stationed at Berhampore."

But though his great intellectual powers, his attainments as an English scholar, his unflinching devotion to work and his perseverance—failed to be duly appreciated by the English officials of Rajshaye and Moorshidabad, it was by virtue of these qualities he became tutor of Raja Kishennath, and afterwards Manager of his vast estates. The princely gift of a lac of rupees to him by his pupil formed the nucleus of his future fortune.

It is said by Babu Amrita Lal Banerjee, his old companion, that Babu Degumber held the office of tutor on two different occasions. It is now impossible in the absence of authentic records, to ascertain the exact dates of these momentous events in the life of Babu Degumber. But an approximate idea of the time may be formed from the fact that Raja Kishen Nath Roy Bahadur committed suicide on the 31st October 1844, and calculating from this year the

time when Babu Degumber received a donation of a lac of Rupees from the Raja, as his tutor and Manager, the gift must have been made between the years 1838 and 1844. Raja Kishennath attained his majority in 1838, and perhaps, from that year, Babu Degumber commenced his tutorship for the second time till the time of the Rajah's death in 1844. And the first time when he served the Rajah as his tutor, must have been previous to the year 1838.

Like the late Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal, Babu Degumber found no scope for the display of his rare talents in Government Service, and had to rely upon his inherent resources and his intellectual and moral qualities to chalk out a career for himself, first as a trader and manufacturer of silk and indigo, then as a kind and sympathetic Zemindar possessing vast landed properties in many districts of Bengal, and lastly as a patriot and statesman in the arena of political life.

It is said that the gift of a lac of rupees, he had received from Raja Kishennath, he invested in the Union Bank. In 1849, the Bank having failed, he lost almost all his money except a small residue of Rs. 25000, with which he began to trade as a silk and indigo manufacturer, stock-jobber, and so forth. He had silk factories in Moorshidabad, at Ramkholla, and Rajaputy. The anonymous correspondent, who wrote a letter to the *Indian Mirror*, on the 29th April, 1879, says that Babu Degumber established a silk factory at Sunkur Mirzapur, near Jungypoor, and another at Dowlut Bazar in the district of Moorshidabad. The same correspondent positively asserts that Babu Degumber was never a private tutor to Raja Kishennath. He says that one Mr. Lambrick was private tutor to the Raja, and Babu Degumber was his dewan. We are not in a position to decide between these two contradictory statements; but it appears from the obituary notice of Raja Degumber written by the late Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal, who was very thick and thin

with him, that the appointment in question had been actually held by the Raja.

The silk manufacturing business soon made him regain his lost wealth, which he invested, this time, in buying Zemindaries in Orissa, in the 24-Pergunahs, and in some other districts of Bengal. The *Indian Mirror* of April 22nd, 1879, containing an obituary notice of the Raja, says that "in this trade he achieved most remarkable success—his trade mark D. M., we believe, having given special value to the silk of Berhampore which was then in great demand." After the China War, his trade fell off considerably, and Babu Degumber removed to Calcutta where, during the Mutiny, when the Government paper was at a ruinous discount, Babu Degumber speculated in buying them up, which afterwards brought him a good profit.

## CHAPTER II.

### HIS POLITICAL CAREER AND DEATH.

We prefer to describe the Raja's closing career in the burning and eloquent words of Kristo Das Pal, his great colleague, friend, and fellow-worker, in the British Indian Association. Kristo Das thus wrote on the subject (vide *Hindoo Patriot* of the 21st April, 1879:—)

"He was now conscious of his approaching end; his last words to the writer were:—"My time is come, take care of your health!" Being a spiritualist, he did not fear death; he looked upon death as the gate to a higher and better world, where those who had been here would meet again. His soul winged its way yesterday at 7-30 A.M. (i.e. on the 20th April 1879). He was about 63 years of age." &c., &c., &c.

"Degumber was early inducted into public life." Whilst yet in his teens, he was thrown into the coterie of the illus-



trious Dwarkanath Tagore, which afterwards proved a nursery of the leading minds of Bengal. Degumber, by his close and intimate association with the Tagores, became one of them in habit, thought, and spirit. He learnt politics at the feet of Dwarkanath Tagore; he was a personal friend and coadjutor of both Prossunno Koomar and Ramanath Tagore; for two days in the week he had a fixed place at the splendid table of the former, and he was the right-hand man of the latter, in all councils on public matters. On the establishment of the British Indian Association, Degumber was its first Assistant Secretary, of which he ultimately became the honored President. In early life he mixed more with the non-official than with the official Europeans. He was familiar with the Gordons and the Caldears, the Stocquelors, and the Hurrys, and took an active part with them in the political warfare of the day. He generally fought unseen, for he did not like to push himself forward. He was a most intelligent and active member of the committee of the British Indian Association, and his varied experience lent much weight to his councils, but he rarely at the time we refer to came to the fore. His first appearance in public was in connection with the so-called Black Act meeting of 1856. There were four Mitter speakers at the meeting, of whom he was dubbed No. 1, by Mr. Cobb Hurry. In 1864, we believe, he was returned by the British Indian Association on the invitation of Government as its representative in the Epidemic Fever Commission, and from that time his talents and abilities became known to Government. They were soon after enlisted in the Legislative Council of Bengal.

He had been previously appointed a justice of the peace and honorary Magistrate for Calcutta, and a visitor of the Wards' Institution. Indeed, from this time his services were often pressed into requisition for this committee and that, by Government. He was nominated to the Bengal Council by three Lieutenant-Governors of Bengal, successively, by Sir Cecil

Beadon, Sir William Grey, and Sir George Campbell, all of whom considered him a most useful and valuable councillor. If he had lived, he would have probably been honored with a seat in the Viceregal Council. In consideration of his distinguished public services he was made a Companion of the most Exalted Order of the Star of India in 1876, and honored with the title of Raja in 1877.

We have already stated that he was appointed in 1864 a member of the Epidemic Fever Commission. His clear intellect at once saw that the doctors were pursuing a wrong course in essaying to trace the cause of the disease. It was neither the trees, nor the tank, nor the ricefields, which had given birth to the malady. He laid his hand upon the right place, and said that the fever being of an endemic character and also of the same type, which had decimated Gour and Cassim Bazar, in times past, cannot be new, and that it must have originated from the same cause, that had produced the disease in those towns. Accordingly he held that it was sub-soil humidity, however caused, which lay at the root of the disease.

He wrote a series of articles on the subject in this paper, which he reprinted in a pamphlet form, and which were received with much favour. He had the satisfaction to see his theory embraced with open arms by the doctors, who had hitherto shewn it a cold shoulder. The government also accepted this theory, and recognized it in a legislative enactment, we mean the Embankment Act, and also issued instructions for its practical enforcement in towns and municipalities. If Raja Degumber had done nothing else, the service, which he thus rendered to the cause of humanity would enshrine his name in the memory of his countrymen. In the Orissa Famine of 1866, he zealously co-operated with Government in devising measures of relief. He possessed estates in Cuttack, and was thus in a position to obtain accurate information regarding the condition of the people in the famine-stricken districts. And his first

hand information seemed to embarrass Government sometimes. In order to utilize him, the Government appointed him a member of the Executive committee of the Orissa famine, to which he rendered invaluable services.

In other public matters his services were also conspicuous. In 1862 or thereabout, the Government of India invited the co-operation of the British Indian Association in the amendment of the Income Tax Act of 1860; Sir Henry Harrington was the representative of the Government, and the Association was asked to nominate two members for conference, and it returned Maharajah Romanath Tagore and Raja Degumber Mitter. The subsequent amendment of the Act was materially based upon the suggestions made by the delegates of the British Indian Association. Rajah Degumber was the *defacto* author of the road-cess scheme. He was a nominee of the British Indian Association to the road-cess Committee, appointed by Government, and although he was strongly opposed to the principle of the road-cess, he considered it his duty, as a loyal subject, to render every assistance in his power to the easy collection of the cess.

If the road-cess scheme is a self-acting one, the merit and credit of devising it belonged to the late Raja Degumber Mitter. It was somewhat modified in details by Mr. Schalch, but the main design was his. In the Legislative Council his practical common sense and intimate knowledge of the country were conspicuous in the many suggestions he offered. He took an active part in shaping the Embankment Act. The great bone of contention in connection with the Embankment Bill was the distinction made between public and private embankments; this distinction was recognized in theory, but not infrequently disregarded in practice. The steady opposition, which he and his colleague Maharajah Jotindra Mohun Tagore offered, extorted from Mr. Schalch the, member in charge of the bill, the schedule of public embankments

maintained at the expense of the State which has once for all settled the difficulty. Raja Dogumber also fought hard against Sir William Grey's Irrigation and Drainage Bill. In order to root out the epidemic fever, some officials conceived the scheme of combining agricultural improvement with sanitation by irrigation. Raja Degumber, in a thoroughly practical speech, pointed out that what might contribute to agricultural improvement would not necessarily contribute to sanitary improvement. Agricultural improvement would require the supply of water, but sanitary improvement would require the draining out of the water. Sir William was convinced of his logic, and abandoned the general scheme, and substituted in lieu of it a project of agricultural improvement by the reclamation of the Dancooni beel in the District of Hooghly. By his determined opposition to the original scheme, he saved considerable public money and much private suffering. In the renewal of the thirty years' settlement of Orissa after the famine of 1866, he took an active part. The Government was not quite disposed to continue the settlement without an increase of the assessment, but he showed by irrefragable facts and logic, that if any measure could resuscitate the miserable people of Orissa, it was the continuance of the settlement on the original basis, and the Government accepted his recommendation. Experience has shewn that the measure has proved a boon to Orissa. He was a most intelligent advocate of the Permanent Settlement. His speeches at the anti road-tax meeting to petition Parliament was one of the ablest vindications of the advantages of the Permanent Settlement. He showed that the loss to the State by the fixation of the revenue in perpetuity was much less compared with the gain to the community at large.

Raja Degumber was neither a ready nor an eloquent speaker, but he was always compact, sensible, and practical."

## CHAPTER III.

## HIS CHARACTER AND IDEAS.

Kristo Das, who had a splendid opportunity to study his friend's character both as a private and public man, wrote as follows :—

"As an example of his boldness and firmness we might mention the movement he made almost alone and unassisted against Mr. Latour, the then judge of 24 Pergunnahas, for his judicial bias. Others would have shrunk from such a hazardous task, but nothing daunted he impeached the Judge before government in an ably drawn up memorial. He had fixed ideas on almost every public question. For instance, while the educated natives were to a man opposed to the annexation policy of Lord Dalhousie, he supported it, because he had no faith in the Native princes, and no sympathy for the cry of Native Government as a national institution.

He was a thorough-going utilitarian, and made the greatest good of the greatest number his motto, and as he felt that the British Government followed that principle, he considered the substitution of that Government for a Native administration tantamount to the redemption of a whole population. His sympathies were republican, but at the same time he did not care much for representative institutions in this country.

In this respect, he was often at variance with his educated countrymen. In matters of religion and social intercourse he was catholic and cosmopolitan in his views. To him the old Hindoo and Mahomedan, the Christian convert, the Brahmo, and the England-returned Indians were equally welcome. His sympathies were, however, entirely conservative on the subject of female emancipation and improvement."

"If the object of female education, he used to say, be to make the household happy, there was far greater happiness in the Hindoo home under the old than under the new system. Nevertheless he did not refuse aid to female schools. He was a staunch advocate of the freedom of the press, and held that the best vindication of the paramountcy of the British Power in the East was the concession of this privilege to the people of this country, and he was deeply grieved when Lord Lytton's Press Act was passed. He greatly valued the pilgrimage of Indian youths to the temples of Knowledge in Europe and America, and as a proof of his own earnestness in the matter, he sent to England his only son, Babu Grish Chandra Mitter, alas ! now no more, for the completion of his education. Being in the front-rank of the community, his purse was as a matter of course open to works of public usefulness, but the greatest and most useful charity which he founded was the maintenance of about 80 poor students whom he gave their "daily bread." He was one of the Honorary Secretaries to the Native committee of the District Charitable Society in which he contributed a fund called after his name, the proceeds of which are applied to the support of some twenty poor persons every month. His private charity to distressed relatives, friends, and dependants, was also large."

Such, in brief, were the main features of the character of this great and noble man. But the most conspicuous and valuable trait of his character was the indomitable energy, patience and perseverance with which he worked his way up from a very small beginning. It was in the dull drudgery of the early part of his career, that he laid the foundation of his future greatness and success. Possessed of strong physic, as Babu Kristo Das told us, Degumber worked hard in early life amidst many adverse circumstances. We have already alluded to the fact that Babu Degumber, while holding the office of a Tehsildar in a *Khas*

*Mehal* in Moorshidabad, was hauled up before a criminal court on the suspicion that he had had a hand in the alteration of a public document in collusion with his subordinate. For a young man of no certain position in society, such criminal prosecution often tantamounts to his ruin. But Degumber, though honorably acquitted, outlived the shock, and came out of the trial as a hero. With positive disgust, perhaps, he left the Government Service for ever and for good. He took to the business of indigo and silk manufacturer, and even in this he had to compete with Messrs. Watson and Co. As a business man, he acquired a thorough knowledge of human nature and of the material resources of the country, and his inherent capacity for work and organization gradually developed in him. As a Zemindar, he used to work hard, and to inspect his landed properties personally. And this was the secret of his success as a landlord. Riches and affluence generally make men luxurious and idle, but in the case of Rajah Degumber, the glitter of gold could not make him swerve an inch from his long acquired habit of assiduity and patient industry. He worked on till his death for the benefit of his countrymen, and we hope and trust his noble example will serve as a guide to our youngmen.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### ANECDOTES.

Babu Raj Narain Bose of the Adi Brahma Somaj has kindly furnished us with the following anecdotes of Raja Degumber.

1. He was a very affable, polite, and courteous man. When he went to visit his Zemindary at Orissa, he returned the visits of all the native gentlemen of

Cuttack, even the poorest among them. He used to say the poorest deserved the greatest attention.

2. He was a very hospitable man, and kept an open table to which even the best men of Calcutta society did not hesitate to attend at times. He was kind and courteous to all.

3. He was a man of strong passions, and slander was very wide-mouthed against his character. He used to express his greatest regret to me that he could not control his passions. He 'knew the wrong, but still the wrong pursued. I used to give him religious and moral advice to the best of my power.

Babu Mohendra Nath Bose, the Small Cause Court Judge of Narail, and the cousin of Rajah Degumber says, in connexion with this anecdote, that Raja Degumber was somewhat rough in exterior, but at heart he was a very kind-hearted man.

4. He used always to narrate to me (Babu Raj Narain) the great opposition he met with to his theory of the cause of the epidemic fever in Bengal, from the other members of the Epidemic Fever Commission, especially the medicals among them ; but a layman as he was, his views were at last adopted by Government. As a proof of the truth of his theory, he used to instance his native village of Konenugger, the climate of which improved on its drainage being properly attended to. With reference to the said opposition, he used to remark that the English were rather an intellectually dull nation. He also used to say that no nation is so selfish as the English.

5. He was a spiritualist. Spiritualism was his religion. Such was his firm belief in spiritualism, that he used to say that, in the future world, he will dine with his friends exactly as he did here, but, of course, on ethereal food. When one of his grand-sons was providentially saved from falling down from the top of his house, he said that his departed father Grish Chundra saved him.



6. He was a very strong-minded man. When his only son, Grish Chundra, died of a fall from his horse, the first thing that occurred to Degumber was to give notice to the police. He was very much grieved, but not to the extent that ordinary men are.

7. He was a very popular man and highly liked by his friends. When he was attacked by severe nervous debility and retired to Babu Heralal Seal's villa at Burranaggur, for a time, all his friends from the highest to the lowest flocked to see him. He was highly delighted at this proof of the attachment of his friends. He was very fond of music.

9. He practised deep breathing, a kind of *Yoga*. He taught me the same. The practice has salutary effect on the bodily system, but not to the extent he believed. He recommended me books on spiritualism.

10. The following anecdotes we have heard from other sources.

#### THE AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA AND RAJA DEGUMBER.

It was in the year 1872 that this newspaper which had been hitherto published from the native village of its well-known editor, Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose, in the district of Jessore, had to be transferred to Calcutta. Pestilence, epidemic fever, and other causes compelled Babu Shishir Kumar and his brothers to adopt this course. He stood in need of patronage and encouragement in his new career; and the first man to whom he applied for moral help was Raja Degumber. Babu Shishir Kumar knew the Raja to be a broad-minded and far-sighted statesman who would readily sympathize with his political aspirations and the aims of his journalistic career. He appealed to the Raja, and the appeal was not made in vain. The Raja lent his moral support to the paper as he thought that an outspoken and fearless journal like the *Amrita Bazar* was a *desideratum* at the time.

Although Raja Degumber was a staunch supporter of the British Indian Association, some of whose members looked with jealousy upon this new aspirant for journalistic distinction, he never hesitated to accord his support to the advancement of the best interests of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

Instances of such magnanimity are rare in these days. Here was one of the founders of the British Indian Association pushing up an editor whose paper was rising as a rival of the *Hindoo Patriot*, the organ of the Association which represented the interests of his own class. The foundations of the power which the *Patrika* has subsequently built up as an organ of Native opinion, were thus laid ; and to Raja Degumber Mitter is to be attributed not a little of the credit of placing in the possession of educated Indians, a journal which has done such staunch and invaluable services to this country.

THE HON'BLE KRISTODAS PAL AND BABU DIGUMBER  
MITTER.

The late Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal once told the biographer himself that, one night, at about 2 A.M., he was all on a sudden awakened from his sleep by his servants. On enquiry, he came to know that Raja Degumber had sent a note to him asking for a name or something of that kind which the Raja had forgotten.

The note was readily answered, and the Raja was satisfied. This circumstance is an evidence of the close friendship that existed between Raja Degumber Mitter and the Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal, both in private relations and in public life. The late editor of the *Hindoo Patriot* was renowned for the strength of his memory, and was always referred to by his associates in politics whenever any fact was the subject of question. Digumber Mitter and he were the two master minds whose union was the strength of the then political life of Bengal.

## THE LIFE OF MR. MANOMOHUN GHOSE.

BARRISTER-AT-LAW, CALCUTTA.

## CHAPTER I.

## HIS PARENTAGE AND BIRTH.

The two brothers Messrs. Manomohun Ghose and Lal Mohun Ghose, whose name and fame have spread all over India, belong to a very old Kyastha family of Bikrampore, in the district of Dacca. The family has a history of its own, as we gather from a manuscript note left by Babu Ram Lochun Ghose, the father of Mr. Ghose :—Ram Bhadra Ghose, a remote ancestor, was the proprietor of a village called Bhulladia, near Sumkote, in Bikrampore. That village which, together with Sumkote has long since disappeared by reason of the constant changes in the course of the Kirtinasha or Pudma river, was the ancestral property of the family which was known, at one time, as the Ghoses of Bhulladia. Ram Bhadra Ghose died, leaving two infant sons. At this time, Raja Gopal Krishna, son of the famous Raja Raj Bullub conceived the idea of marrying his daughter by a Kayastha woman to one of the two minor sons left by Ram Bhadra Ghose. He, accordingly, sent for the two boys who, however, left the village, and took shelter in the house of a powerful Zemindar, of Purgunah Idilpur, viz., Komul Roy Chowdry. Raja Gopal Krishna then made several ineffectual attempts to obtain possession of the two boys, and it is recorded, that in consequence of the refusal of the Idilpur Zemindar to make them over, Raja Gopal Krishna sent a small army, with the result that there was a pitched battle fought on the banks of Bhaira Khal between the adherents of Idilpur Zemindar and the troops of Gopal Krishna. The latter suffered a heavy defeat, several men having been

killed and wounded; and Gopal Krishna was compelled to abandon the idea of getting possession of the two sons of Ram Bhadra Ghose. The Raja, however, took his revenge by razing to the ground the family house of the Ghoses at Bhulladia, and confiscating all their property. The family eventually settled in another part of Bikrampur, on the banks of the Dhalaswari river, about 15 miles from the old historic town of Dacca, in a village called Bairagadi, where Babu Ram Lochun Ghose, the father of Mr. Manomohun Ghose, was born in the year 1790 A. D. He was a self-educated man, there being no English schools or colleges in those days. After filling various humble offices under the English Government, he was selected in 1841, by Lord Auckland, then Governor-General of India, to fill the office of a Subordinate Judge, then called chief Sudder Amin, he being one of the first batch of the Indian gentlemen who were appointed to the judicial office under the British Government. He was an intimate friend and coadjutor of the late Raja Ram Mohun Roy with whose ideas of social and religious reforms, he was in hearty sympathy. Babu Ram Lochun Ghose was instrumental, to a great extent, in establishing the English College at Dacca, at a time when the prejudices and superstitions of his fellow-countrymen deterred them from encouraging the diffusion of European education in Eastern Bengal. He made a liberal donation to the funds of that college which led the Government to found a scholarship in his name which is annually awarded to some student, and is known as the "Ramlochun Ghose Prize." While he held the appointment of Principal Sudder Amin of Krishnaghur, in the district of Nuddea, (which he did up to within a few years prior to his death), his eldest son, Mr. Manomohun Ghose was born at Bairagadi, in Dacca, on the 13th March 1844. It was in this old historic town of Krishnaghur, where Ramlochun

built a house and resided till the time of his death, that his second son, the famous Mr. Lal Mohun Ghose was born in 1849, the third and the youngest being Murali Mohun Ghose.

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## CHAPTER II.

### HIS EDUCATION.

Mr. Manomohun Ghose was educated, as a boy in the Krishnaghur Collegiate School ; and in March 1859, he passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University, and joined the Presidency College, in 1861. He studied here for the short period of one year only, as he left for England in the following year with Mr. Satyendra Nath Tagore to compete for the Civil Service. He had, while yet a boy of 12 or 13, conceived the idea of proceeding to England for purposes of education, and his friendship with Mr. Satyendra Tagore in Calcutta, enabled him to carry out the idea, without much opposition from his parents, who would have naturally objected to send him to a foreign country without a friend or companion.

The departure of these two young men on such a high educational mission, marks an epoch in the history of our country, for no other educated Bengali had preceded them for such an important purpose. The success which attended their efforts has since encouraged many a native youth to follow in their footsteps ; and the Indian Civil Service has now in its exalted ranks, Natives of India who are in no way inferior to their European brethren in education, administrative ability, probity and integrity, and the Bar is thronged with Native Barristers-at-Law who, in general, have proved themselves worthy of all the noblest traditions of their high profession. Politically, socially and mo-

rally, the country has gained from the success of Indian youths both at the Bar and in the Civil Service ; and as a pioneer in this new field of adventure, Mr. Ghose must have his due meed of praise.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### HOW THE INDIAN MIRROR WAS ESTABLISHED.

Mr. Ghose, from his early youth, has taken a lively interest in politics. It was in the year 1860, the ryots and zemindars of Nuddea, Jessore, Rajshaye, Moorshidabad and Pubna revolted against the Indigo Planters of Bengal. Harish Chandra Mukherjee, the Editor and founder of the *Hindoo Patriot* took up the cause of these helpless ryots. Mr. Manomohun, who as a citizen of Krishnaghur, had ample opportunity of knowing the hardships and oppressions committed upon them by the Indigo Planters, used to write almost every week, long letters to that journal, on this all absorbing topic of the day. After the death of Harish Chandra, the *Hindoo Patriot* shewed signs of decadence, and Mr. Ghose started the fortnightly *Indian Mirror* in 1861, with the pecuniary assistance of the Venerable Debendra Nath Tagore. Babu Norrendra Nath Sen, its present renowned Editor, then contributed to its columns. Thus Mr. Ghose laid the foundation of a journal which, in fulness of time, became a powerful daily organ of educated Native public opinion in India. Mr. Ghose is a staunch supporter of the Native Indian Press and has helped it, from time to time, not only with sound advice, but also by occasionally contributing to its columns.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## HIS CAREER IN ENGLAND AND AT THE BAR.

In March 1862, he left for England with Mr. Satyendra Nath Tagore now a Judge in the Bombay Civil Service. He appeared at the Civil Service examination in 1864 and 1865; and the marks for the Oriental languages being reduced, and other changes in the rules and regulations having been suddenly introduced by the Civil Service Commissioners, he was unsuccessful in entering the Service. He then published a pamphlet in England, and made an agitation on the subject, which eventually had the effect of raising the marks for the Oriental languages. This pamphlet drew considerable public attention at the time, and was very favorably noticed by the press in England, as well as in this country. As there is an unfortunate impression in the minds of our countrymen, regarding the influence which residence in England is supposed to exercise on the minds of our young men, it may be useful and interesting to quote here the sentiments expressed by Mr. Ghose on this subject, when he was only 22 years of age, shortly before his return to India :—

“The other objection urged by the opponents of the Oriental languages which we have above alluded to—namely, that Indians ought not to be permitted to enter the Service unless they are thoroughly Europeanized—raises a very important question, and deserves serious reflection, for it involves consequences extending far beyond the legitimate sphere of the present controversy. As we have already said, no one would rejoice more than the present writer to see his countrymen adopt European manners and ideas, and imitate those sterling qualities which have contributed to the civilization of the West. We should like, by all means, to see our countrymen vie with

the most favored nations of Europe in their political and social institution; and, above all, we should rejoice to have their minds freed from the yoke of traditions, and themselves liberated from the chain of those pernicious customs which continue to keep them physically and morally degraded. But we confess, we should regret nothing more than a system of false education, which would impart to us all the vices of the European, extinguish in us every spark of sympathy for our own country, and make us lose all sense of duty towards ourselves. We could not but look with horror upon such a system of training as would result in a total extinction in our mind of all respect for the great Hindu name, and for that literature and civilization which are indissolubly connected with that name. We are afraid that the tendency of English education in India has already been, to some extent, to deprive many of us of that sympathy for our countrymen which is at present so necessary for our regeneration, and to alienate us from all those ties which ought to bind us to our own country. Is it desirable, then we ask, that English education should impart to us the vices of the European, deprive us of our own virtues, and make us look down with contempt upon our own countrymen? Let us be Europeanized by all means, if that term means being more *civilized*; but let us not lose that respect which we owe to our country, our language, and our literature.”\*

It may be satisfactory to note that Mr. Ghose has throughout his career been guided by the views expressed by him nearly 24 years ago.

Along with his preparation for the Civil Service, he was also a regular student at Lincoln's Inn, and in June 1865, he was called to the Bar a few months after his father's death in India. He came back to his mother country, in November of the same year with

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\* The Open Competition for the Civil Service of India by Manomohun Ghose published by Messrs. Trubner & Co., London, 1866, p. 13.

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Miss Mary Carpenter. Before this time, no other Indian had qualified himself for the Bar except Mr. Gyanendra Mohun Tagore, who however, never practised in this country. To Mr. Ghose, therefore, belongs the credit of being the first Indian who has achieved success in his profession. We shall describe hereafter how Mr. Ghose succeeded in giving a healthy tone to the criminal administration of this country, and what are the real secrets of his marvellous success at the Bar. Mr. Ghose, at the beginning of his career at the Calcutta Bar, had enormous difficulties to contend with. The members of the English bar hesitated in those days, to mix on terms of social equality with a Bengali gentleman ; while on the other hand, his countrymen naturally disapproved of the adoption on his part, of European modes and habits of life. The English members of the bar declined to recognize him as one of their number, unless he was prepared to live like an Englishman, while on the other hand he was assured that, he had not the remotest chance of getting any support from his countrymen, unless he was prepared to identify himself with them in all social and religious matters. Mr. Ghose, however, resolved to steer a middle course, instead of being swayed by the prejudices and unreasonable suggestions of either party. Besides the social difficulties, already referred to, Mr. Ghose, had scarcely a friend in the profession to help him in the beginning. He was, however, fortunate enough, early in his career, to win the esteem and confidence of some of the Judges of the High Court, such as Mr. Justice Kemp, the late Mr. Justice Dwarka Nath Mitter, and Mr. Justice Phear who treated him with marked consideration. In 1869, while he was still struggling in his profession, he sent his renowned second brother Mr. Lal Mohun Ghose, to compete for the Civil Service and to get called to the bar.

The first celebrated case which Mr. Ghose con-

ducted with great ability and renown was the well-known case of *The Queen vs: Aminudin* as reported in 15 Weekly Reporter, Criminal Rulings, page 25. In this celebrated state trial, Mr. Ghose was called upon to defend the prisoner somewhat suddenly as Mr. Craigh, his counsel died shortly before the case was heard. It was heard before Mr. Justice Norman and Mr. Justice Bayley, in 1871, and though Mr. Ghose lost the appeal, the late lamented Mr. Justice Norman, then officiating as Chief Justice, complimented Mr. Ghose highly for the ability with which he had argued the case. This case created a sensation at the time, and secured his reputation. The other criminal cases in which he achieved a distinction are the celebrated Lal Chand Chowdry's case at Chittagong, the Fenuah case, the Shapur murder case, the Nuddea Students' case, the Rungpore Deer case, the Jamalpur Mela case, Mulukchand Chowkidar's case, the Lokenathpur case, and so forth. The biographer has summarized the history of these celebrated cases in a separate book (*History of celebrated Criminal Cases*) and published it in 1888. In all of these cases, Mofusil Magistrates and the Police both European and Native, erred grievously in doing justice to the aggrieved parties, and Mr. Ghose, with marvellous tact, patience and perseverance, and often times at great sacrifice of time and money, secured justice to the poor and aggrieved parties. It can be safely stated without any fear of contradiction, that no other lawyer, be he a pleader or a Barrister, has done more, when the cause and interest of justice required it, for the impartial administration of criminal justice in the Mofusil, where, some times, the Police and the Magistracy, unhampered by public opinion, ride rough shod over the weak and the poor. As a gentleman of the long-robe, he has a prestige of his own, and this prestige coupled with his other forensic talents, his honesty of purpose, his devotion

to work, contributed largely to his success in his profession. The secret of his success, he himself assures us is, that he never appears in a case without carefully studying all the facts, and that he invariably dissuades his clients from engaging him in cases which he considers to be hopeless. To Mr. Ghose belongs the credit of being the first Native Barrister-at-law who has done yeoman's service to his country by checkmating the devices and vagaries of many Mofusil Police and Magisterial officers. The marvellous tact, the unexampled self-sacrifice, the deep and genuine sympathy he exhibited in rescuing a poor illiterate cultivator of Nuddea named Muluk Chand Chowkedar, from the gallows, whom the late Mr. Dickens, the then Sessions Judge of Nuddea condemned in 1882 to death for murdering his child Nekjan of 9 years of age, have unmistakably shewn of what real stuff he is made. (vide "Romance of Criminal Administration in Bengal." published by Messrs. Thacker, Spink & Co. in 1887.)

The fearless way in which he shewed the weakness of the Magistracy and the Police in the Nuddea Students' case, in the Lokenathpore case, in the Fenuah case, has enhanced his reputation both among his countrymen and right-thinking Englishmen, and made him the idol of the people at large. To such a successful, irreproachable and glorious career our rising generation ought to look up as its model.

The specialty of Mr. Ghose as a barrister, lies in the art of cross examining witnesses. He never loses his temper, and with marvellous tact and thorough knowledge of human character, he quickly discerns wherein lies the weakness of a case. The success of an advocate in cross examination, especially in a criminal case, lies in a thorough and comprehensive grasp of all the facts of a case, just in the same way as a thorough and full diagnosis of the condition of a diseased man, by a doctor, makes him master of his

situation. The natural serenity of his temper, his courteous manners, and above all his thorough insight into human nature, have contributed, not a little, to the marvellous success of his career. There is no chance either for a hostile or a dishonest witness, or for a stubborn and obstinate Judge to escape from the charming influence of this great Indian Barrister.

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## CHAPTER V.

### HIS FAMILY LIFE AND IDEAS.

Mr. Ghose is one of the best men of our society. He is a loving husband, a dutiful son, an affectionate brother and a worthy and respected citizen of Calcutta. His love towards his mother, sisters and brothers is unbounded, and he tries his best to keep them in comfort. In August 1885 he took his son Mr. Mahi Mohun then aged 13, to England where he is now studying for the Civil Service. Mr. Ghose is a great patron of Native Newspapers to almost all of which he subscribes. He is courteous, affable and accessible to all. Pride and hauteur engendered by wealth and high position he has none; and the poorest of his neighbours are as accessible to him as the highest in social rank and position. His respect towards his mother borders on worship. His ideas about religion may be summed up in one sentence, namely that the highest religion consists in being a useful member of society, and in serving one's fellow-creatures to the best of his power. The spirit of asceticism inherent in the life of Hindoos, should in his opinion, be discouraged, and man should try to be useful to society, for the best way to serve God, is, according to him, to serve mankind. As regards his political ideas, he has a firm faith in the justice and honesty of British Rulers, but the Anglo-Indian idea of excluding the people from offices of great trust and res-

possibility is a mistake. In course of time, Mr. Ghose expects the Indian constitution will be analogous to that of the colonies. As regards female education, he is of opinion that a man who wants an intellectual companion must educate his wife ; but in the case of the vast body of his countrymen this want is not yet felt. Mr. Ghose had been married in his early youth, before he left for England. On his return, he gave his wife a good English education. Mrs. Ghose has twice accompanied him to England, and she is able to mix in English society like any English lady, while retaining at the same time the inherent modesty and the national instincts of a Hindu woman.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### HIS DELEGATION TO ENGLAND.

In August 1885, Mr. Ghose left for England, with his whole family for a change. He had not, before that, given himself any rest from his arduous work during a period of nearly 18 years. At that time, he had no idea that he would be called upon by his countrymen to discharge any public duty. In October of that year, however, while he was in England, the political associations all over India, in view of the approaching dissolution of Parliament, resolved upon sending to England, a delegate from each of the three Presidencies—Bengal, Bombay, and Madras,—for the purpose of agitating Indian questions in England, and securing, if possible, greater attention to Indian affairs among the British Electors. The Bombay Association deputed Mr. N. G. Chanda Varkur, while the Madras public bodies selected Mr. Salem Rama Swamy Mudilier to represent them in England ; and these gentlemen were accordingly sent at the expense of their respective Presi-

dencies. In Bengal, however, the Associations took advantage of Mr. Ghose's presence in England, and telegraphed to him, requesting him to join the deputation. He, accordingly, complied with the request of his countrymen, and for several months, devoted himself to the cause of India, at his own expense, by addressing numerous public meetings in different parts of the United Kingdom. This was the first organized attempt on the part of the people of the different Presidencies to rouse public attention in England, through the agency of their own representatives. And the experiment was eminently successful.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### ANECDOTES.

#### THE LOKENATHPORE CASE AND HOW HE TOOK IT UP.

In 1876, a man named Ramgati Biswas was said to have been murdered in the Lokenathpore Indigo factory. The officials of the Nuddea District came to the extraordinary conclusion, after making a secret enquiry into this matter, that the man had, maliciously, and in order to accuse the factory people of murder, committed suicide, by drowning himself in a tank close to the factory, and the matter was hushed up, as is sometimes the case in this country. A demi-official report was sent up to Sir Ashley Eden, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who with some reluctance, accepted the report, and the local authorities directed the prosecution of two men named Ram Gati Kahar, and Troyluckya Nath Biswas who had deposed before the Magistrate, that Mr. Glascott, the Manager of the factory had detained the man shortly before his death.

The biographer took compassion upon these poor men and requested his friends Babu Okhoy Kumar

Mukherjee and Babu Sree Gopal Chatterjee of the Krishnaghur bar, to defend these poor men in the lower Courts, without any fees, and so they did. But these poor men were convicted and sentenced to two months' rigorous imprisonment. The local pleaders and the entire native population of the district, disapproved of this unjust action of the local executive, and advised the biographer to secure the services of a Barrister-at-Law to move the High Court in the matter. He then asked Kristo Das Pal's opinion, and it was he who suggested that Mr. Ghose should be induced to take up the case. The biographer was not then personally known to Mr. Ghose; and so one day, he went to see him as a stranger. Mr. Ghose who had acquainted himself with the facts of this ugly case from newspaper reports, carefully read its records, saw that the whole proceedings were illegal and unjust and agreed to take up the case. He preferred an appeal to Mr. Lawford, then Sessions Judge of Nuddea, and the Magistrate of the district of Nuddea, when called upon to support the conviction, intimated through the Government pleader that he had nothing to say in support of it! The poor men were released from jail, and blessed Mr. Ghose. The case created a considerable sensation at the time, and not only the educated public of the district of Nuddea naturally felt an interest in it, but the outside public closely watched its proceedings as reported in the *Statesman*, the *Indian Mirror*, and the *Hindoo Patriot*, at the time. An unknown Calcutta gentleman, we believe, was so deeply impressed by the noble example of self-sacrifice and patriotism shewn by Mr. Manomohun Ghose, in this celebrated criminal case, on behalf of a set of ignorant, poor rustics of his own district, that he requested the late Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal to send three Volumes of the "Life and Writings of Joseph Mazzini" as a present not only to Mr. Ghose, but also to Babu Okhoy Kumar Mu-

kerjee, a pleader of the Krishnaghur bar who defended the poor helpless people in the lower Courts. We subjoin below the letter of Babu Kristo Das addressed to Mr. Ghose on this subject.

CALCUTTA, 20-3-81

MY DEAR GHOSE,

An admirer, who wishes to remain unknown, has forwarded to me for your kind acceptance these three volumes as a humble recognition on his part of your patriotic services in the Lokenathpore case. It affords me much pleasure in being made the medium of communication on this very agreeable subject,

Yours Sincerely,  
KRISTO DAS PAL.

To

MANOMOHUN GHOSE Esq.

HOW MULUK CHAND CHOWKIDAR WAS SAVED  
FROM THE GALLOWS.

In a similar manner, Muluk Chand Chowkidar who had been sentenced to be hanged by the Sessions Judge of Nuddea, in 1882, on the charge of having murdered his own little daughter Nekjan only nine years old, was saved. The man was undefended, and was to forfeit his life for an offence falsely attributed to him. The Police had tutored his little daughter Golukmoni, Nekjan's sister, to say that she had seen her father trampling down to death, her poor sister Nekjan. The mother had also been induced to corroborate the same story, and the Sessions Judge, with the unanimitous verdict of the Jury, convicted him.

Some junior pleaders of the court, viz Babus Prasanna Kumar Mitter, Tara Podo Banerjee and Okhoy Kumar Mukerjee thought that the man was not really guilty in the matter, as it was extremely improbable that he should have murdered his own little child without any cause. So, they requested Mr. Ghose to take up the case. He agreed to do so on



being satisfied in his own mind that the man was innocent. The High Court quashed the conviction and ordered a new trial which was held at Alipur in the 24-Pergunahs, and poor Muluk Chand was then defended by Mr. Ghose for three days with the result that the prisoner was acquitted. Poor Muluk Chand still comes twice a year to Mr. Ghose with some presents and acknowledges his gratitude to him.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### ANOTHER PERSONAL ANECDOTE.

It was in the year 1880, Babu Shyama Charan Sanyal of Santipur incurred the displeasure of the late Babu Chandra Shekhur Bannerjee, the then Deputy-Magistrate of Ranaghat for having attacked the judicial proceedings of the said Deputy-Magistrate in the columns of the *Statesman*, as its mofussil correspondent. Thus provoked, the Deputy-Magistrate one day arrested him, all on a sudden, in the Ranaghat Railway Station, on the E. B. R., on a trumpety charge. The clever and shrewd correspondent Babu Shyama Charan wrote a letter to Mr. William Riach, the then editor of the *Statesman*, who wrote to us the following letter :—

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THE STATESMAN AND FRIEND OF INDIA

3 CHOWRINGHEE ROAD

Calcutta, 10th March, 1880.

DEAR SIR,

Shyama Charn Sanyal of Santipur was arrested yesterday at the Ranaghat Railway Station, as you may have heard. He has sent me a letter, and blank paper signed by himself, and asked me to employ Mr. Manomohun Ghose on his behalf. I have seen Mr. Ghose, but as we are ignorant of the facts, Mr. Ghose can do nothing. We do not even know on what charge he has been arrested, whether on the old warrant, or for a new offence. Besides,

before Mr. Ghose could make any application on his behalf to the High Court, he must have an affidavit to present. If Mr. Ghose has full information as to the arrest, and an affidavit as to the circumstances on which he could base his application, he is willing to apply to the High Court, and doubtless, be able to get him released on bail, and his case transferred. If you know any friends of Shyama Charan's, will you kindly tell them all this, and that Mr. Ghose, though very willing, can do nothing until properly instructed.

Yours very truly,

(Sd) WILLIAM RIACH.

On receipt of this letter which was addressed to us confidentially, we moved in the matter, and helped Babu Shyama Charan to be released on bail, with the help of Babu Gyanendra Lal Roy M.A. B.L., then a pleader of Krishnaghur. Mr. Ghose then made a motion to the High Court on behalf of Babu Shyama Charan who was honorably acquitted of all the charges brought against him, and the Deputy-Magistrate was censured and degraded.

While we helped Shyama Charan, we incurred the wrath of the Deputy-Magistrate who, through the District Magistrate of Nuddea threatened us with the following letter :—

EXTRACT FROM THE RANAGHAT DEPUTY-MAGISTRATE'S

LETTER NO. 133,

*Dated 1st April, 1880.*

"I have the honor to request that you will call upon Ram Gopal Sanyal to make a statement as to whether he is or not the writer of the two letters from Krishnaghur which appeared in the *Statesman* newspaper of the 15th March, and the *Hindoo Patriot* of the 22nd March."

No. 722 J. G.

Dated Nuddea, the 9th April, 1880.

Forwarded to Babu Ram Gopal Sanyal for reply.

(Sd.) W. V. G. TAYLER.

Magistrate of Nuddea.

On receipt of this most discourteous letter from the Ranaghat Deputy-Magistrate, forwarded through the District Magistrate of Krishnaghur, we communicated the news to Mr. Riach and Babu Kristo Das Pal.

The late lamented Kristo Das, on receipt of our letter, addressed us as follows :—

“CALCUTTA  
14-4-1880.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your letter and have shown it to Mr. Ghose. He will write to you on the subject. Please act upon his advice.

Yours sincerely,  
KRISTO DAS PAL.

Mr. Riach favoured us with the following letter:—

CALCUTTA,  
14th April, 1880.

MY DEAR SIR,

Mr. Ghose says, you should decline, on principle, to answer the question, though he says, he can see nothing libellous in your letters to the *Statesman*.

Yours very truly,  
(Sd.) WILLIAM RIACH.

Give no reply of any kind till you hear again from me, or from Mr. Ghose.

The final letter at last came. It runs as follows:—

CALCUTTA,  
14th April, 1880.

MY DEAR SIR,

Mr. Ghose and I think that you should reply to Mr. W. V. G. Tayler as follows :—

P. S. Please make no statement at present verbally to any one at Krishnaghur about the letters.

(Sd.) W. RIACH.

To

THE MAGISTRATE OF NUDDEA,

KRISHNAGHUR,

*Dated, 20th April, 1880.*

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your memo No. 722, dated the 9th instant, forwarding to me for reply an extract of a letter from the Deputy-Magistrate of Ranaghat, in which he requests you to call upon me to make a statement, whether or not I am the writer of certain letters referred to therein; and in reply, I beg respectfully to state that as I am not aware of any law which authorizes the Deputy-Magistrate, either directly or through you to call upon me peremptorily, in his official capacity, to make any such statement, I must decline to answer the question put to me, which I should probably have very readily answered, if, in the first instance, I had been asked unofficially, and in a civil manner.

I have the honor to be,

SIR,

Your most Obedient Servant

RAM GOPAL SANYL

Mr. Ghose favoured us with the following letter on the subject :—

4 THEATRE ROAD,  
*Calcutta, 21st April 1880.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Many thanks for your kind letter. I have been excessively busy, or else I should have written to you long ago. I drafted the reply which Mr. Riach wrote at my dictation, and sent you a copy. I dare say, you have sent the reply as advised. The Deputy-Magistrate of Ranaghat must be out of his mind to go on in the way he is doing. You have already heard the result of Babu Shyama Charan Sanyal's case. The Judges are going to hand the Deputy-Magistrate up to Government, and they have disbelieved his affidavit. I think he is sure to be degraded, if not dismissed. If he proceeds against you on any charge, you must at once come to me, and we will apply to the

High Court. Mr. Tayler seems to give in to his Deputy in almost every thing. You must decline to talk to any of the officials at Krishnaghur about the authorship of any letters which have appeared in the newspapers.

Please keep me informed of all that you hear in connection with the Ranaghat Deputy and Mr. Tayler. I do not think I can come to Krishnaghur within a fortnight.

With best regards, believe me,

Yours sincerely,

(Sd) MANOMOHUN GHOSE.

One word more in this connexion, and we have done. The concluding portion of our reply to the Magistrate of Nuddea viz, the sentence "*which I should probably have very readily answered if, in the first instance, I had been asked unofficially, and in a civil manner*" was omitted from our letter at the suggestion of Babu Kristo Das Pal.

## THE LIFE OF MR. WOOMES CHUNDER BONNERJEE,

*Barrister-at-Law, Calcutta.*

## CHAPTER I.

## HIS BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EARLY EDUCATION.

The remarkable history of the life of this great Brahmin jurist and lawyer, who now deservedly stands foremost and first in the rank of the Indian advocates now practising in the High Court of Calcutta, is as suggestive and instructive, as any that is to be found in the pages of European biography. Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee was, like Lord Eldon, an indifferent and capricious, rather than a studious boy in his youth; a great scapegrace at school, for he once ran away from home to Raneegunj, and one of his favourite pursuits in life was to attend theatres and to take part in theatrical shows. How this theatre-loving, indifferent schoolboy became the Standing Counsel to the Government of India, we shall describe hereafter. We now proceed to say something of his ancestors. Mr. Bonnerjee comes from a very respectable Koolin Brahmin family who early settled at Baganda, some 16 miles to the west of the town of Howrah. His grandfather, Pitambur Bonnerjee came to Calcutta and settled there. He was at first a school-master, and then became Banian of Messrs. Collier Bird & Co., attorneys of the Supreme Court of Calcutta. He had a country house at Kidderpur in the suburbs, where his grand-son Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee the second son of his eldest son was born on the 29th December 1844. On his mother's side, Mr. Bonnerjee is descended from the renowned Sanskrit scholar and philosopher, Pandit Juggonath Turkopunchanun of Tribeny in the District of Hoogly, for his mother is

a great great-grand-daughter of that famous learned *savant* of Bengal.

Babu Pitambur Bonnerjee had considerable property at Khidderpore and within the Metropolis itself, but all these he lost afterwards not from his prodigality but for his inordinate expenses in charity and religious performances. Grees Chunder Bonnerjee, the father of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, was an *alumni* of the old Hindu College, and died in the year 1868 at the early age of 45. He was an Attorney of the Calcutta High Court, and had four sons of whom Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee is the second, and Satya Dhone Bonnerjee, who is a Master of Arts in Sanskrit of the Calcutta University, the youngest, the other two having died while young. Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee was first sent to a patshalla at Simla in Calcutta; and having learnt his mother-tongue there, he was sent for English education to the branch school attached to the Oriental Seminary, the *alma mater* of Kristo Das Pal and Shumbhoo Chunder Mukerjee.

From the branch he went to the main school, and from the Oriental Seminary, Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee took his admission into the Hindoo School and read there under Babu Mohesh Chunder Bonnerjee and Mr. Carnduff. In 1861 he was in the first class of that school, but did not appear even at the Matriculation Examination.

The boy, as we have already said, used to work by fits and starts while at school, and never shewed any predisposition to win his spurs in the University of Calcutta. Capricious as he was, he did not make any considerable advancement in his scholastic career, though, it is on record, that he used to get sometimes double promotions for his high proficiency.

In him we see an example of a boy whose school-day career did not at all indicate that the indifferent, theatre-loving and run-away student would once again apply himself to the study of law, literature, science, and politics, and take his stand among the greatest men

of his time. In July, 1861, the boy fled to Ranigunj for some family quarrel, and had to be taken back by his father after a good deal of persuasion.

Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee had a good charming face in his youth, and a "good face was a good recommendation in his case." He was liked much by the late Babu Kally Prasana Singhee and Maharajah Sir Jotendra Mohun Tagore at whose houses he played the part of both male and female actresses in their amateur theatrical parties. The father, finding that it was hopeless for his boy to make any further progress in the school, made him adopt his own profession. In November 1861, Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee was articled to Mr. W. P. Downing, Attorney of the Supreme Court of Calcutta. In May 1862, he severed his connection with this gentleman and joined Mr. W. F. Gillanders as his clerk. In this arena of his new life, he saw the mistakes he had committed in his early life, and strove hard to make ample reparation for them. He studied hard and laid the foundation of his vast legal acquirements which bid fair to secure for him the highest prizes of his profession.

It is not generally known that the *Bengalee* newspaper, which is now edited by Babu Surendra Nath Bonnerjee was established about the month of May, 1862. Mr. Bonnerjee helped the late Babu Grish Chunder Ghose, its first editor, in various ways in the establishment and management of the paper, and afterwards procured from his friend, the late Babu Kali Prasanna Singh, a press, types and other materials for the purposes of the paper.

In 1864 a splendid opportunity presented itself and made Bonnerjee what he now is.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,

"Which, when taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

The tide in the affairs of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee commenced from this memorable year; and he possessed all the necessary qualities to rise along with it.



## CHAPTER II.

## HIS CAREER AS A BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

It was in the year 1864, Mr. Rustomjee Jamsetjee Jeejeebhai of Bombay made over 3 lacs of rupees to the Supreme Government for the purpose of establishing five scholarships, to be competed for by Indian youths to study law in England. Out of these five scholarships, three were to be given to Bombay, and one respectively to Bengal and Madras. The Supreme Government, in order to select a candidate from Bengal, appointed a representative committee having Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Campbell, one of the Judges, of the Calcutta High Court as its President, and Sir Henry Sumner Maine, Mr. John Rose, Babu Prusuna Kumar Tagore, Nawab Amir Ali Khan Bahadoor, and Mr. G. S. Fagan, the then Chief Judge of the Calcutta S. C. Court as some of the Members, and Mr. W. L. Heeley as its Secretary. There were some twelve candidates for this scholarship among whom Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, the late Henry Raymond Fink and Babu Umbika Churn Bose, now a pleader of the Calcutta High Court, were prominent men. A *viva voce* examination having been held, Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee was considered to be the best eligible candidate. With this scholarship, he left for England on the 16th October 1864 to enter the Bar. He studied hard at the Middle Temple, and read under such eminent jurists and distinguished legal practitioners as the late Mr. J. Henry Dart, then one of the conveyancing Counsel to the Court of Chancery, Mr. (now Sir) Edward Fry, one of the Lord Justices

of the High Court, and with the help of his father's friends, and by dint of patience, perseverance, and industry he made a rapid progress in his profession in a comparatively short time. Among the Judges of the High Court, the late lamented Mr. Justice Norman and Mr. Justice Arthur Macpherson used to treat him with every sort of consideration and helped him materially, and so did Mr. J. Pitt Kennedy and several other distinguished English advocates of the Court. Before his enrolment he had to appear, in 1868 we believe, before Mr. W. F. Macdonell, v.c., then Sessions Judge of Nuddea (Krishnaghur), in a criminal case in which he ably defended a poor rustic woman on a charge of perjury brought against her by a Civilian, Mr.— (vide our "History of Criminal Cases" published in 1888, p. 39). Mr. Bonnerjee happened to be at Krishnaghur to enjoy a holiday at the family dwelling house of Mr. Manomohun Ghose. The case, which was to have been entrusted to Mr. Ghose, could not be taken up by him because of his friendship with the prosecutor, and so Mr. Bonnerji was engaged to defend the poor helpless woman. She was acquitted of the charge brought against her, and Mr. Macdonell complimented Mr. Bonnerjee, in the highest terms of praise, for the ability with which he defended her. The case created a considerable sensation at the time, and the success achieved in that *cause celebre* enhanced his reputation not a little.

But it should be stated here that Mr. Bonnerjee made his *debut* in his noble profession more as a civil than a criminal lawyer, and maintains his ground in keen competition with some of the ablest English Barristers of the High Court. It is giving no little credit to him as a professional man to say that, up to date, no other native of India has achieved such a marvellous success in the bar as he has done. It is impossible for us, however, within the short compass of this brief sketch, to delineate, step by step, the gradual

development of his forensic talents, sagacity and foresight, so conspicuous in his remarkable career. Suffice it to say, that his name will go down to posterity for having defended, with great ability, and at considerable sacrifice of time and money, such popular man as Babu Surrendra Nath Bonnerjee during the contempt case in 1883, and that old, honest and true friend of India—we mean Mr. Robert Knight, the veteran editor of the *Statesman* and *Friend of India*, in the famous Burdwan libel case in 1887.

He won his spurs by perseverance, knowledge, and ability, diligently cultivated, till at last he rose steadily upwards to one of the highest offices that the Government of India has to bestow—that of Standing Counsel. In this high post, he officiated on four different occasions, viz., (1) from the 29th March 1881 to 21st November 1882, (2) from 26th March 1882 to 21st December 1884, (3) from 20th September 1884 to 21st November 1886, (4) from 16th March to 9th November 1887.

In 1878, Sir Ashley Eden, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, thought of appointing Mr. Bonnerjee a Member of the Bengal Council, and privately requested the late Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal to sound him on the subject, but Mr. Bonnerjee respectfully declined the offer. Naturally of a shy and modest disposition, and not much given to fuss and noise, he refused to take his seat on the Bengal Council. In the same way, when the post of a puisne Judge of the High Court fell temporarily vacant in 1881 and 1882, and when a permanent vacancy occurred in 1884, Sir Richard Garth, then chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, did his best to induce him to accept the post, but he declined. And the reason is not far to seek. It is said of Lord Matsfield that he knew no interval between no business and 3000l. a year, and the same remark holds good in the case of this Brahmin jurist whose annual income is over a lac a year.

He is now in the zenith of his profession, highly respected by all classes of people, both European and Native.

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## CHAPTER III.

### HIS POLITICAL CAREER.

We have already said in a previous chapter, that Mr. Bonnerjee had evinced a strong desire to take part in the politics of his country, long before he went to England. It was he, who with Babu Bacharam Chatterjee helped the late Babu Greash Chunder Ghose to start the *Bengalee* newspaper. While, in England, he took an active part in establishing the "London Indian Society," having Mr. Dadabhoi Naoroji as its President. Mr. Bonnerjee was the Secretary of this society for some time; and its inaugural meeting was held at the residence of Babu Gyanendra Mohun Tagore in England, in 1865. This society was afterwards amalgamated with the "East Indian Association."

It appears from the Journal of the "East Indian Association" (No. 1. for the quarter ending August 1867) that Mr. Bonnerjee delivered a long and an admirable speech on "representative and responsible Government of India," at a meeting held on the 25th July 1867, the late Sir Herbert Edwards, K.C.B. C.S.I., being in the chair, (vide page 158, Journal E. I. A.) In this able and well-reasoned speech Mr. Bonnerjee shewed that a representative form of Government was necessary alike for the permanency of the British rule in India, as well as for the welfare of his country. The space at our disposal being too short, we remain content with the following extract from that memorable speech :—

"There is no time to discuss the particular way in which

India should have representation and its details. Many suggestions have been made on the subject, requiring deep consideration. My opinion is that there ought to be a representative Assembly, and a senate sitting in India, with a power of veto to the Governor-General, but under the same restriction as exists in America, with perhaps an absolute power of veto to the Crown." (See page 176, Journal E. I. A.)

Then again he says :—

"To understand the people, you must go to them direct. You will then find that they possess a remarkable degree of intelligence. They are equal to any task, but the task must not be imposed on them with a high hand. They must be properly treated. If they are trusted in any way, however slight, their gratitude knows no bounds, and a sense of responsibility so works upon them that they are sure to execute any commission entrusted to them with great care and skill. This sense of responsibility on their part, it is, which will ensure representative Government a thorough success in the country. I do not mean to deny that their education is very defective—in fact they might be said to possess no education at all, if we measure education by a European standard. But compared to their richer countrymen, who are, there can be no doubt whatever, thoroughly capable of appreciating representative Government, they are not a whit less educated than the lowest householders compared to the educated classes in this country. The common people of India may not be able to understand Sanscrit, or explain the bearings of the Sunkhya philosophy, but in common walks of life they are as shrewd and careful as possible. They are neither extravagant nor intemperate ; they are neither migratory nor dissipated. They are as a rule family men, labouring hard to maintain themselves in comfort, if not in affluence. These qualities may not be the result of a very extensive education, but they at

least shew that the men who possess them, though even unable to read and write, are honest men—men who have practical common sense, who understand what is best for their own interests, not selfishly but with due consideration for all about them, both high and low, and therefore, who may be supposed to understand the interests of their country. If any body could be trusted with the franchise, surely these would be the men. If these considerations are not sufficient—I mean if they do not prove that the people of India are not ignorant, I am not afraid to take my stand on their ignorance, and argue in the words of the greatest jurist of modern times in England—I mean the late Mr. Zabez Austin. He asks:—In a political community, not duly instructed, is not popular Government, with all its awkward complexness less inconvenient than monarchy? And, unless the Government be popular, can a political community not duly instructed, emerge from darkness to light? From the ignorance of political science which is the principal cause of misrule, to the knowledge of political science which were the best security against it?" I see no reason whatever why the people of India are not capable of understanding and exercising the functions which naturally inhere in subjects possessing a representative Government." (vide p. 176, Journal E. I. A.)

It would thus appear that Mr. Bonnerjee's zeal and ardent desire for the reform of the existing bureaucratic form of Government of India had developed in his mind while he was a student in England, long before he took an active and leading part in the recent Congress movement.

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#### HIS VISIT TO ENGLAND IN 1888.

#### AND HOW THE INDIAN AGENCY WAS ESTABLISHED.

In the middle of the year 1888, Mr. Bonnerjee went to England, chiefly with a view to recruit his health in its bracing climate. He was then suffer-

ing from a partial attack of diabetes, and his state of health was such as required immediate relief and respite. But man proposes, God disposes. As soon as he landed in England, after taking a little rest, his patriotism and ardent love to serve his mother country spurred him on to further work in the field of politics.

He saw Messrs. Digby and Dadabhai Naoroji, and with their help started the London Agency and took upon himself the responsibility of raising funds in India for its support. During his short stay, extending over a period of not more than 8 months, he went to different centres of intelligence and public opinion in England, attended meetings called by important political bodies, and delivered numerous speeches.

At a meeting held at the Town Hall, Northampton, in which Mr. Bradlaugh, M. P., and Dadabhai Naoroji made remarkable speeches, Mr. Bonnerjee delivered the following eloquent speech (Vide *Indian Mirror*, 13th September, 1888):—

Mr. Bonnerjee, who was cordially welcomed, said: Mr. Mayor, ladies and gentlemen,—You have come here to-night to hear Indian grievances discussed before you, and I shall not, therefore, follow my friend, Mr. Nowroji, in stating to you the great benefits which most undoubtedly you have conferred upon my country. My task is to lay before you the grievances of that country in order that you may consider them, and see for yourselves whether there are no means by which to redress them.

#### NOW THE FIRST GRIEVANCE

that we labor under is that there is no responsible Government for India at all. ("Hear, hear" from Mr. Bradlaugh.) The Government of India is in the hands of one of Her Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, called the Secretary

of State for India, who is assisted by a council, but would you believe it, that this gentleman, the Secretary of State and his Council are sometimes ignorant of things which private members of parliament are in full possession of? (Cries of "Shame" and laughter). The other day I had the great privilege of listening to your respected representative in the House of Commons—(loud cheers)—and in the course of his speech he was able to tell the Under-Secretary of State that he knew a good deal more of what was going on in connection with the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company than the Secretary and his advisers did in this country. (Cheers.) When any question is asked in the House of Commons of the Under-Secretary the answer invariably is—"The Secretary of State has no official knowledge of the matter" (laughter)—and unless the hon. member putting the question is persistent, and after a short time again puts the question, it seems to me that the Secretary of State never has any official knowledge of anything under the sun in India. (Laughter and cheers.) Then the Secretary of State is entirely dependent upon the advice he receives from India, and he does not seem to have in his possession any machinery by which it is possible for him to check what the officials in India send to him as a true account of what is taking place. ("Shame.") I need not go farther than just across St. George's Channel to remind you that the official information sent over is very different from the information which from other sources you are getting daily. (Cheers.) I don't for one moment mean to say that the condition of India is like the condition of Ireland. Thank goodness, we are ever so much better off there than the people in Ireland (hear, hear), but I bring forward the case of Ireland for the purpose of showing you that

#### OFFICIAL INFORMATION

is not in every instance true information. (Cheers.) In India the supreme rule is in the hands of the Viceroy and his Council. They act from the information which they receive



from the District officials. However clever, however able, however well-meaning, however inclined to do justice the Viceroy may be, he is more or less in the hands of those who have to administer the country in the Districts, in the places where the people congregate, where the people lead their daily lives, and it is the officials who are entrusted with the charge of these Districts who have the weal or woe of the country in their hands, and when you appeal against any action of theirs to the Viceroy, you do not get any reply for months and months, and as a matter of fact, the only reply vouchsafed is that the Viceroy sees no reason to interfere. (Cries of "shame.") To a certain extent this state of things must be so, but it need not be so in the hard and fast way in which it is being carried out, and if we had some voice in the government of our country, there is no doubt we should be able to put questions of administrative details to the officers responsible in the Council for the Government, and we should be able to stir the members of the Government up to do, what I have no doubt they conscientiously try to do—namely, good to the people of India. (Cheers.) Now, I will give you two instances to show how the present system of Government has,

#### INSTEAD OF ADVANCING THE COUNTRY,

done very much to retard it to a certain time. The Legislative Councils, as my friend Mr. Nowroji, has told you, pass laws—the local Councils for the provinces represented by them, the Supreme Council for the whole of India. Now these Councils, particularly the Viceroy's Council, seem to be a sort of hothouse for English gentlemen going out there to carry out their own views. They try their theories in this country, and absolutely fail, but somehow they manage to get seats in the Indian Council in Calcutta, and the things that have been scouted in this country are carried out there, notwithstanding the opposition and clamour and protest of the people. ("Shame.") From 1861 to 1872 we had in India

a Criminal Procedure Code which had been drafted by no less an authority than the illustrious Thomas Babington Macaulay. It had been looked over very carefully by no less an authority than Sir Barnes Peacock, whose name you may have heard as being the Chief Justice in Bengal for many years, and as now being one of the members of Her Majesty's Privy Council. Several other persons well acquainted with the law had perfected this code. Under this code we were allowed trial by Jury in such Districts where the Local Government considered we were fit to have trial by Jury. (Cheers.) I may mention there is no single District where trial by Jury may not be safely introduced at the present time (cheers,) but that is, by the way. The verdicts of Juries were final.

#### THE PRISONER HAD THE RIGHT

of carrying his case, if convicted, to higher courts if there were any points of law to be urged on his behalf. That remained the law, and worked very well indeed to a very considerable extent. In the year 1870, to our very great misfortune, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen was appointed law member of the Viceroy's Council. He went out to India and the first thing he took in hand was called "The amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code." That Amendment consisted in this that he took away the finality from the verdict of the Juries; he gave the power which no Judge in India had ever possessed before of enhancing sentences on appeal; and he made the Criminal Procedure Code almost Draconian in its severity. (Loud cries of "shame.") You have, I have, no doubt, heard that the people of India are as law-abiding as any people of the earth—(cheers)—and yet in a country like that the Criminal Procedure Code has been made the severest of any in the civilised world. ("Shame" and sensation.) I will tell you what happened under this law. This is an instance, you may call it extreme instance, but it took place, and there are others which take place every day, to the great oppression of

the people of the country, who protest, but no body listens to their protest. ("Shame.") A man was tried in one of the Districts in Bengal for murder. The trial took place, not before a Jury, but before what are called Assessors—two Assessors, and a Judge. The Judge, concurring with the two Assessors, found the man

#### NOT GUILTY OF MURDER,

but found him guilty of manslaughter, and sentenced him to hard labor for five years. He appealed against his conviction—he had the right of appeal, the trial having been held with the aid of Assessors and not with the aid of a jury. The case came before the High Court of Calcutta. He was a poor man and could not be properly represented. The Judges upset the conviction as regards manslaughter, found this man guilty of murder, sentenced him to be hanged, and notwithstanding petitions for mercy from nearly the whole country that man was hanged. (Great sensation, and loud cries of "shame.") He had in the meantime undergone nearly two months of that imprisonment, so that he was kept in rigorous imprisonment for two months, and at the end of that he was hanged. ("Shame.") Now this created such a shock in the minds of the people that it is impossible to describe the sensation in the country at the time. Everybody wept aloud almost, but there is nobody to take any notice of that. Our District Officers thought that the *prestige* of the High Court would be lost if the Government interfered and allowed that man to live. The High Court had the power and could have sentenced him to transportation for life ; but no—the man was SENTENCED TO BE HANGED, and hanged he was accordingly. ("Shame, shame.") There are many instances where a man has been fined; after Sir James Fitzjames Stephen's law he has appealed, and the result has been that the Judges, instead of affirming the fine, have sent him to hard labor for many months. ("Shame.") Now I saw the scenes created in this country when it was reported, and truly reported, that

some County Court Judges in Ireland had enhanced the sentences on appeal. There was a tremendous outburst (cheers), and the result was that even Mr. Balfour was obliged to send instructions to his County Court Judges not to enhance sentences on appeal. (Cheers.) But a thing like this goes on in India almost every day. The people cry aloud against it, but there is no body to pay heed to their cry. ("Shame.") The way in which legislation is conducted in India is such that if I gave you instances you would cry "Shame." This very Sir James Fitzjames Stephen passed what is called the Evidence Act for India. It is the substance of Pitt Taylor's book boiled down considerably. Well, one clause he has introduced is that at a criminal trial the previous conviction of any prisoner may be given in evidence at any stage. That is to say in the year of grace 1888 a man is charged with picking another person's pocket.

#### YOU MAY GIVE EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM

that in 1830 he was guilty of bigamy. (Laughter.) And what do you think is the reason given for this? Sir James Fitzjames Stephen says in his report to the Legislative Council: "It is said that evidence of this description may prejudice the prisoner. My answer is that if the prisoner is guilty"—mark the logic—"if the prisoner is guilty I do not see why he should not be prejudiced, the object of giving evidence against a man being to show whether he is guilty or not." And laws of this description have been passed, people have protested, but there is no heed paid to these protests. Representative institutions and other things which go to make up a civilised country only exist for the happiness and well-being of the people. If without giving us representative institutions, you can discover something by which the people will be able to lead a happy and contented life, have all their aspirations, humanly speaking, satisfied, I am perfectly certain that my countrymen would rejoice at the idea, but at present, no one has been able to discover anything better than such institutions as are possessed

more or less by other countries in the civilised world. But it is

#### NOT EVEN REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS

in the form that exist in this country that we want. We say, whether you admit it or not, you are dependent for the good Government of our country upon the advice you must necessarily seek from the people themselves. (Cheers.) Officials in India do not admit it, but they do seek it. If they have a difficult question to deal with; they call together this man and that man, and they call together a third man, being Natives of the country, with whom they discuss the matter. These persons, as has been pointed out to you, are not responsible to any body, and they may give such answers as may chime in with the views known to be held by the District Officer; and instead of getting good advice from responsible persons, the District Officer generally gets advice that leads him to take action not in accordance with the will of the country. The subject of India, like the country itself is a very vast one, and I am afraid, if I were to detain you from now till the morning, I should not be able to exhaust it. (Cheers, and a voice, "Go on.") You will have, I am glad to say, the opportunity of hearing my friend, Mr. Bradlaugh, (loud cheers), and he will make that clear to you which I probably have been unable to do.

#### "FOR GOOD OR FOR EVIL.

India has become bound up with you. (Cheers.) You cannot having carried her so far, turn her adrift, and of her own will India will never ask to be allowed to go adrift. (Loud cheering.) It is necessary for the peace of both countries—that this great country as well as her great dependency—that some method should be devised by which the people will be more contented, the people will get more to it (cheers), the people will be able to discharge the duties of citizenship. (Cheers.) You are a superior nation, you are governing the country, and it behoves

you, one and all, to take pride in measures which will be a blessing not only to India, but to this country. (Renewed cheering.)

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#### THE "NATIONAL CONGRESS" AND MR. BONNERJEE.

This great National movement, which is but the most visible and remarkable embodiment of the combined actions and energies of the educated Indians to ameliorate their political, social and religious condition, has found in Mr. Bonnerjee, an active, sympathizing friend and earnest worker. In its very incipient stage, when the people of Bombay held its inaugural meeting in December 1885, Mr. Bonnerjee was one of the few Bengali gentlemen who, at considerable expense, and loss of time, went there to take part in the deliberations of that self-constituted Parliamentary body. The people of Bombay, be it recorded to their credit, honoured Mr. Bonnerjee by electing him to be the President of the first National Congress; and it is needless for us to say that in this honoring Mr. Bonnerjee, they did not only honor to themselves, but paid a very high tribute of honor to the great Bengali race of which, he is one of its best and greatest men.

Mr. Bonnerjee, though not a platform orator—for platform oratory is never in his line,—delivered a very sensible, and sweet but compact speech marked with flashes of eloquence and sobriety of thought quite worthy of his high position in society. We need not unnecessarily fill up the short space at our disposal by quoting it here in extenso as, we believe, most of our readers must have read it in the Congress Report of 1885. Besides, Mr. Bonnerjee lent his house in Park Street Calcutta, for the use of the delegates that assembled in the Metropolis, in the following year. And we do not think it a breach of confidence to state for the sake of truth that, besides all

these extraneous help in furtherance of this great National movement, he has always, and we should say very gladly, supplied the "sinews of war" for it. Those who know, under what tremendous difficulties these political and social agitations are carried on in this backward country, cannot but appreciate in their true light, the secret and unostentatious gifts made by men like Mr. Bonnerjee and others, in furtherance of these National movements.

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#### HIS FAMILY LIFE

Mr. Bonnerjee married the daughter of Babu Nilmony Mutylal of Bow Bazar in 1859, at the early age of 15. By this wife he has four sons of whom the eldest Komul Kristo was born on the 5th March, 1870. Mr. Bonnerjee as befits his high position, could have easily trained his son for the Indian Civil Service, but as he is strongly of opinion that none but a man of great intellectual and moral powers should be allowed to enter the Civil Service, he did not like that his son should come out as a Civil Servant with vast irresponsible powers that are pretty often much misused in this country. Such being his convictions on this point, his eldest son is now being trained up as a Barrister. As regards his second son, he intends to train him up in the medical profession.

Mr. Bonnerjee, as we have already said, was married in early youth. He seems to be of opinion, in regard to the question of early marriage, that it is injurious and pernicious to the extreme ; and that the leaders of society and the educated people ought to exert themselves, as they have been doing, to eradicate the system from our society. He educated his wife immediately after his return from England. Mrs. Bonnerjee is an accomplished lady, possessing all the virtues and good qualities of a Hindoo woman.

HIS RELIGION, AND IDEAS ABOUT MEN, AND  
MANNERS.

Mr. Bonnerjee believes that all established religions are good in their own way, and that it is the height of folly for a man born in one religion to change it for another. Once he had an inclination to become a christian, but after a good deal of study of theological books, he changed his mind. Charity, he says, should be the highest guiding principle of every man ; and the best religious man is he who serves his country well. He is much opposed to the Hindoo joint-family system which, in his opinion, is the parent of all litigations in the country. As regards female education, he is strongly of opinion that no female should be given in marriage before she is thoroughly well educated. He intends his daughters to be trained as lady doctors.

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HIS CHARACTER.

The highest and noblest feature of his character is that he delights in doing good to others without making any fuss about it. He acts according to the sacred gospel truth that "let not thy left hand know, what thy right hand does." He is affable, courteous, and kind to all. The greatest service he rendered to the cause of the freedom of the Press in this country is well illustrated by his noble defence of Mr. Robert Knight the veteran editor of the *Statesman and the Friend of India* in the well-known defamation case of Mr. Hugh Miller vs: Robert Knight. If there is any man among the Anglo-Indian editors in India who has, by his fearless and able advocacy of the cause of India, won the gratitude of the Indians, it is Mr. Robert Knight. To put down and ruin this old friend of India, a base machination hatched up a conspiracy against him, and gentle Reader ! who it was that came



to the rescue of Mr. Robert, the Lion-hearted friend of India, from ruin and disgrace? His ruin and disgrace meant the disgrace of all India ; and it was at this critical time, this great Brahmin Jurist, with the true spirit of a Brahmin's self-sacrifice, defended the man. Then again turn to the case of Babu Surendra Nath Bonnerjee in 1883. Within 24 hours short notice, he had to appear with his counsel to answer to the charge of having libelled one of her Majesty's Judges. There was no time to lose. With hot haste the affidavit was drawn up, and the Brahmin advocate, with an insight into the gravity of the situation, implored for mercy for the Brahmin Editor and Patriot of the day. Gentle Reader ! What services could be more valuable, splendid, enduring, and ennobling in their moral effects than these.

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#### MR. BONNERJEE'S LITERARY TASTE.

Mr. Bonnerjee assures us that he has read Shakespeare and Milton several times, and among other English Poets, the works of Wordsworth and Shelly are among his favourite books of study. The old dramatists of England and their immortal works have as much fascination for him as any other writings of other equally celebrated authors of Great Britain. He is a voracious reader of the writings of Charles Lamb whose "Essays of Elia," he has a great fondness for. Among the works of the Bengali novelists, Mr. Bonnerjee says, he feels a peculiar pleasure in reading the "Durgesh Nandini" of the immortal Bunkim Chunder Chatterjee. Babu Shumbhoo Chunder Mukherjee tells us that Mr. Bonnerjee reads his newspaper, the *Reis and Rayyet*, so well-known for its brilliancy and picquancy of its writings, for seven days in the week, at his leisure moments.

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LIFE OF HURISH CHANDRA MUKHERJEE  
OF THE *HINDOO PATRIOT*.

CHAPTER I.

HIS BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

More than 28 years have elapsed since the death of this Indian patriot ; but within this long interval, no one has yet attempted to write a regular history of his life. It was in 1863, Mr. Framji Bomanji a Parsee gentleman of the Elphinstone College, Bombay, wrote a book entitled the " Lights and shades of the East, or a study of the Life of Babu Hurish Chandra Mukherjee, and passing thoughts on India, and its people, their present and future " published from the *Alliance Press* of that city. The book was dedicated to the late Sir Henry Edward Bartle Frere K. C. B., the then Governor of Bombay. The book we have carefully perused, but it contains very little of the details of the life of this renowned man. We therefore attempted a short sketch of his life in our biography of the late lamented Hon'ble K. D. Pal, published in December, 1886. Since then, in October of the year following, we brought out a separate work on his life, in Bengali, with the pecuniary assistance of His Highness the Maharajah of Joydebpur in Dacca. Saying this much, we now proceed to the narration of the leading events and characteristics of the life of this great man.

Hurish Chandra was born in the year 1824 in the month of Bysak, (April) in the suburban town of Bhowanipur, near Calcutta, in the house of his maternal uncles Babus Beerashur and Debnarain Chatterjees. His father Babu Ram Dhun was a high caste Coolin Brahmin, who was, to quote the famous expression of Hurish Chandra himself, in retort to a slandering term applied to him by the famous Mis-

sionary Journal—the *Friend of India*—, “a Hindu among the nations, a Brahmin among the Hindus, a Kulin among the Brahmins, and a Foola among the Kulins.” His father had three wives, of whom the last was Sreemutty Rukhini Dabee. By this wife, he had two sons, of whom Haran Chandra was the eldest and Hurish the youngest.

## CHAPTER II.

### HIS EDUCATION, AND STRUGGLES IN EARLY LIFE.

Hurish Chandra, being a Kulin Brahmin boy, was, as is generally the case with people of his class, brought up in the house of his maternal uncles. When he was five years of age, he was sent to a *patshalla* where he picked up knowledge of his mother tongue; and at the age of seven, he began to learn the English alphabet with his eldest brother Haran Chandra. He was then put in as a charity boy in the local *Union School* where he studied English for more than six years, and it is said, that he had to leave the Institution at the early age of fourteen, in search of an employment to make provision for himself and his poor family. The interesting details of his school-life are lost in obscurity, as there is now no one living in the family who could tell us how this sapient youth, who, afterwards, in the heyday of his journalistic career, proved himself to be a terror to Lord Dalhousie for his annexation policy, and stood up as a staunch supporter of Lord Canning during the troublous times of the Sepoy Mutiny, and as a firm and true friend of the ryots during the indigo crisis of 1860, and was

\*Lucky Narain Mukerjee  
Debi Prosad Do.  
Ram Dhun Do.  
Hurish Chandra Do.

His Great Grand-father.  
Grand-father.  
Father.

more than a match for the combined strength of the entire planting community of Bengal,—received his eleemosynary kind of education in this charity school, and what progress he made therein. But, of this, we are sure, that Hurish Chunder received a scanty education at school which, adverse circumstances compelled him to leave, at the comparatively early age of fourteen ; and that his real education commenced afterwards when he entered the arena of the world. On the “ broad stage of the world,” where he, afterwards, came to play an ever-memorable part, he first appeared both as a diligent and laborious student, and an *Omedwar*, or a candidate for an appointment in a Government or a mercantile office. When he left school in search of an employment, he begged for a common clerk-ship, but he had the mortification to find his school-passport or his merit ridiculed by the heads of offices. Born of a poor parent, having no influential friend to back him, he at last betook himself to the precarious profession of a writer of petitions, bills and letters, which brought him, no doubt, a stray rupee now and then, but the paltry income derived from this source was not enough for his purpose. He had to provide for his family then consisting of his old mother, brother and wife ; and the awful fix in which he found himself at this time is thus described by Babu Shumbhoo Chunder Mukherji, the present editor of the *Reis* and *Rayyet*, who temporarily succeeded Hurish Chunder as editor of the *Hindoo Patriot* after his death in 1861. Babu Shumbhoo Chunder heard this doleful story from Hurish Chunder himself which, we transcribe below, from the *Mukherji's Magazine* of 1862.

“ On one unfortunate day, when he had not a grain of rice in his house for a simple dinner, and the call of nature could not be attended to, he thought, poor soul, of mortgaging a brass plate to buy his simple fare. It was raining hard and

furious, and there was no umbrella to go out under. Pensive and sad did the famished youth sit in the house, meditating upon his unfortunate lot—not, however, without a full reliance in the providence of Him who oversees the needy wants of all, providing with an unsparing hand for the poor and the destitute. *He* looked down upon Hurish, sitting alone and grievous, and rescued the unfortunate victim of cruel fate from sheer starvation, by sending to him, just in the very nick of time, the *mookhtyar* of a rich *zemindar* with a document for translation. The fee was but two rupees—but it was a god-send: like the manna in the wilderness to the wandering Israelites, it proved to be the providential supplying of his pressing wants; and Hurish, receiving it, offered up his thanks to Him who had so mysteriously saved his life.”

Such was the bitterness of poverty at the outset of his memorable career. He was scarcely more than fourteen, when he obtained an employment, we do not know how, as a bill writer on Rs. 10 per mensem, in the now defunct firm of Messrs. Tulluh and Company, one of the auctioneers of Calcutta. After sometime, he asked for a little increase of pay, but it was refused. The self-reliant Brahmin youth took the refusal to be an insult and gave up the appointment in disgust. With a true Brahminical spirit of self-abnegation which was the leading and by far the most brilliant characteristic in his life, he jostled on and suffered all the miseries and privations of an adverse fortune till Providence, in his ineffable mercy, contrived means to relieve his distress. Mr. Framji Bomanji in his book says that in 1848, a vacancy in the subordinate ministerial rank worth Rs. 25 per mensem occurred at the Military Auditor General's Office. Fortunately for Hurish Chunder, it was thrown open to competition, and on successfully passing the test he secured the appointment.

This was indeed the turning point in his remarkable career. In this office he worked till his lamentable death in 1861, and the decent income earned from this office varying from Rs. 25 to Rs. 400 a month, supplied him with the sinews of war with which he fought for the cause of his countrymen during the Sepoy Mutiny and the Indigo crisis. Here he came in contact with Colonels Champneys, the Deputy, and Goldie, the Auditor-General, who, to quote the words of the late Babu Kristo Das Pal, at once "discovered his latent powers, intelligence, and extraordinary business capacity, and never failed to encourage him with friendly advice, reward, and hope." It was these noble hearted English gentlemen who supplied him with books and newspapers and periodicals from their own private library, and encouraged him in every possible way to acquire a knowledge of politics, of history, of jurisprudence and of law. Far from discouraging him in his journalistic career, as is now unfortunately done by officials in general, Messrs. Champneys and Goldie gave him every possible encouragement consistent with their high official position. Since leaving the *Union School* Hurish Chunder had been carrying on private studies with the diligent devotion of an ardent student, and preparing himself for a prominent place among men of "light and leading" in Bengal. Hurish Chunder was not a man to be chilled by the damping influence of the dull drudgery of a *Karamee's* life; and with admirable self-sacrifice, diligence, and perseverance, he not only rose, step by step, in the ranks of the ministerial service then open to the natives of the country, but stored his mind with varied knowledge to take lead as a great journalist and politician in the dark days of the Sepoy Mutiny, and the Indigo crisis. Colonels Goldie and Champneys were not slow in discerning his high intellectual powers, and readily conferred

on him, as opportunity presented itself, the highest post at their disposal, namely that of Assistant Military Auditor, worth Rupees 400 per mensem,—an appointment hitherto held exclusively by Europeans. The details of his office-career in Government employ have fallen into darkness and cannot be now known with any degree of tolerable exactness. But, we know that he was held in high esteem by his official superiors for his manliness, independence, and great capacity for business. An intelligent and educated *Karanee* in those days, possessing the necessary qualifications for the proper discharge of the duties of his office was more respected by his European office-masters than he is now. And the reasons for this altered and deplorable state of things are too many to be dwelt upon here, at large. A sad change has now come over the spirit of the policy of the Government itself, and of its officials in general in regard to the treatment of natives in its service shewing a natural desire to take part in the political amelioration of their mother-country. But such was not the case at the time of Hurish Chunder. The number of educated men at the time we are speaking of, was limited, and the Anglo-Indians and the Government officials had nothing to fear from them. But later on, with the growth of education, when the educated Natives began to tread on their toes, and to aspire for those high posts of emolument and responsibility which had been in their exclusive possession, they felt uneasy and began to grumble at it.

Hurish Chunder, the *Karanee* will be known to posterity not as a quill-driver in the Auditor-General's Office, but as a great patriot, capable of making stupendous sacrifices for the sake of his countrymen, as a journalist of great ability and honesty of purpose, and lastly as a politician of a very high order. He played an important part in the history of

Bengal in these capacities while retaining the post of a *Keranee* in a Government Office. As a journalist, he ruthlessly attacked the annexation policy, and exposed the hasty and ill-matured steps the Government took during the Mutiny time, but the Government and its officials instead of checkmating him, shewed him all the indulgence worthy of a paternal Government. Colonels Champneys and Goldie his immediate superiors, far from throwing obstacles in his way, treated him with all the kindness and respect he deserved. But times have considerably changed, and an embargo has been put by Lord Northbrook and Sir George Campbell since the year 1875, upon the Government servants taking part in Indian politics, or writing for the Press. But let that pass.

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## CHAPTER II.

### HIS SELF-CULTURE.

Since leaving school where he learnt very little, he assiduously applied himself from his fourteenth year to the acquirement of useful knowledge. He borrowed books from his masters, Colonels Champneys and Goldie, and read them with care and patience. Bitterness of circumstance served as a motive power in acquiring more knowledge than what had been picked up in the *Union School*. He exercised the utmost economy in saving money from his small income of Rs. 10 per month, as a bill-writer in Messrs Tulluh and Company's Office, to buy books with. And at last, when he secured a more lucrative post in the Military Auditor General's Office, he became a regular subscriber to the Calcutta Public Library, and began to read with the avidity of a scholar. In the absence of authentic information, it is now impossible for us to dwell upon the manner in which he used to read. The Hon'ble Raja Peary Mohun Mukherji, tells



us that Hurish Chunder read 75 volumes of the old *Edinburgh Review*, some three or four times over. After the Office hours, he used to go to the Calcutta Public Library, and spend two or three hours a day there in reading Newspapers and other books. That he could read fast will be apparent from the statement of his step-brother Babu Rajkishore Mukherji of Utterpara that he read these volumes of the *Edinburgh Review* within the short space of 5 months. Possessed of marvellous memory, great energy and patience, he, within a very short time, acquired a thorough knowledge of the English and the Indian history and politics. His knowledge of philosophy was no less sound. His lectures at the Bhowanipur Brahmo Somaj now published by Babu Brojo Lall Chuckerbutty bear ample testimony to his proficiency. Such was his inextinguishable hankering after knowledge that he often times walked from Bhowanipur to the Cornwallis Square, a distance of about 4 miles, after his office hours, to hear the lectures of Dr. Duff. Early associated with Babu Sumbhoo Nath Pundit (afterwards a Judge of the Calcutta High Court) and other pleaders of Bhowanipur, he acquired a knowledge of law which proved useful in his after life. Dr. Sumbhoo Chunder Mukherji, the Editor of the *Reis* and *Rayyet* says that when in 1852 he became a member of the British Indian Association, he, learnt all the Regulation Laws in order to be able to carry on discussion with Babu Prasanna Kumar Tagore and Mr. W. Montrieo, the Father of the Calcutta Bar.

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#### HIS MARRIAGE AND GLIMPSE OF HIS SOCIAL LIFE.

Early in life he married Sreemuty Mukhoda Debee the daughter of Gobinda Chundra Chatterji of Utterpara ; and while he was sixteen, a son was

born who died within 2 or 3 years after his birth. His wife also died immediately after. He therefore married for the second time, a lady who still survives only to lament the death of her illustrious husband. For want of reliable information, it is now impossible to picture him out in his domestic life. But of this much we have heard that he enjoyed very little of domestic peace in his life. Babu Kally Churn Shome, a citizen of Calcutta and now a pensioner who had worked with Hurish Chunder in the Military Auditor's Office, is our informant on the subject. His mother, it is said, was a garrulous and quarrelsome lady who, sometimes, outraged the feelings of her son and disturbed the peace of the family. But Hurish Chunder was none the less respectful and obedient to his mother. In those days, a habit of drinking sometimes for consideration of health, and sometimes for pleasure was a common vice among almost all the English educated natives of Bengal, and Hurish Chunder was no exception to the rule. Want of domestic felicity sometimes led him into other vices which it is now painful to reflect upon. As a hard worker in the field of politics and journalism, he perhaps had to sustain his vigour with the help of alcohol, and sometimes in its use, he ran into excess. Babu Modhoo Soodhun Roy, the first Proprietor of the *Hindoo Patriot*, tells us that on every Thursday night he used to come to the office of the paper, and at one sitting generally wrote all the articles, news and summary of European news, but he could not do without wine. These were the little blemishes in his character which, to be faithful, we cannot mince from our readers; but he had so many virtues both as a public and private man as a set-off against these minor defects in his character that in judging of him we should rather overlook them and imitate his good and noble examples.

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### HIS CAREER AS A JOURNALIST AND CONTRIBUTOR TO THE PRESS.

From his early youth, Hurish Chunder, as he advanced in knowledge of politics, history and literature, shewed a strong predilection for journalism. Babu Kristo Das in his letter dated, Larkin's lane, 25th October 1862, to Mr. Framji Bomanji says that Hurish Chunder first flashed his pen in the columns of the *Hindoo Intelligencer* then conducted by Babu Kashi Prosad Ghose, and "practised public writing in the columns of the *Englishman*, which was then edited by Mr. Cobb Hurry, who in those days was a great friend of the Natives." Amidst the arduous duties of his official life, he managed to make time not only for extensive private studies but trained himself up as a journalist by writing to the various newspapers of the day. Long before he joined the British Indian Association in 1852, which was the best training ground for a young politician, and long before he set himself up as a journalist, and the Editor of the *Hindoo Patriot*, he had acquired a perfect command over the English language and politics. We have the authority of no less a personage than the late Babu Ram Gopal Ghose, who in his speech on the death of Hurish Chunder said that the famous petition sent from India protesting against the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company in 1853, was "drawn up" by Hurish Chunder himself.

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### THE ORIGIN OF THE *HINDOO PATRIOT*.

We transcribe below what we have written on this subject in our work on the life of Kristo Das Pal. Dr. Sumbhoo Chunder Mukherji the Editor of *Reis* and *Rayjet* is our authority and informant on the subject.

“Babu Modhoo Shoodun Roy of Bara Bazar who had a Press at Kalakur Street first conceived the idea of starting a newspaper, and it was from his Press that the *Hindoo Patriot* was first issued in the beginning of the year 1853. The first Editors were the three well-known brothers of the Ghose family at Simla, viz, Babus Srinath Ghose, Girish Chunder Ghose, and Khetra Chundra Ghose. Babu Srinath Ghose was then head clerk of the Calcutta Collectorate, under Mr. Arthur Grote, who has now retired. They were assisted now and then by Babu Hurish Chunder Mukherjee, a clerk in the Military Auditor General's office (now called the Military Comptroller General's office) on a monthly salary of Rs. 100. After 3 or 4 months, the brothers Ghose gradually severed their connection with the paper, and the entire task of editing thus fell on Hurish Chunder Mookherjee. In those dark days of the pre-University period of English Education in Bengal, the native journalist had uphill work to perform. He had no constituency to support and cheer him. The European community took no interest in Indian affairs, and native newspapers in English, however ably conducted, were little appreciated by the public. There were few in those days who could read English newspapers, and fewer still who could afford to pay for them. Even the better classes were apt to think, that a paper edited by a native could not be up to the mark. Hence the circulation of the *Hindoo Patriot* was confined to a few only, and received very little public support. The location of the office and the press in one of the back lanes of Bara Bazar, moreover stood in the way of its success.”

It was about the year 1854 that Babu Modhoo Shoodun became seriously ill and had to go up-country for a change. The press was therefore sold to a third party, and the *Hindu Patriot* was published from Satyagyan Shuncharini Sova's press at Bowanipur. Hurish Chunder then established a press of his

own, now known as the *Hindu Patriot* press. What afterwards took place is this described in our life of Babu K. D. Pal.

The ostensible proprietor was his brother Babu Haran Chunder Mukherjee, who was appointed manager. The annual subscription was then Rs. 10 ; but even at this rate the *Hindoo Patriot* had scarcely a hundred subscribers. But as might be easily inferred the "get up" of the paper was not very satisfactory. With the removal of the Press, however, to the neighbourhood of the late Sudder Dewany Adalut, its financial prospects became more assuring. The educated Bhowanipore public and the native gentlemen connected with the bar and the office of the Sudder Court, (who mostly resided in that neighbourhood) felt a sort of local interest and pride in the paper and began to patronize it. At that time there was no other English weekly in Bengal, conducted by natives, except the *Hindoo Intelligencer*, edited by Babu Kashi Prosad Ghosh ; and the only journals of the same kind in the other Indian Presidencies were the *Madras Rising Sun*, and the *Hindoo Harbinger* of Bombay. Amongst the earliest subscribers to the *Hindoo Patriot* was the well-known Indian statesman Mr. Sashia Shastri, now Regent of Puddocotta. From the year 1853 down to the close of the year 1855, Hurish Chunder conducted his paper with great ability, and considerable sacrifice of time and money. In 1856 the Widow-Marriage question occupied much public attention and Hurish Chunder lent his powerful pen to the advocacy of reform. But though the independence with which the *Patriot* was not conducted was exactly calculated to secure the good will of the public—particularly the Indian public who, in matters of reform, are strongly conservative—the Editor never swerved from what he considered to be his path of duty. No considerations, however important, ever led him to sell his conscience, and notwithstanding the frequent pecuniary losses he had to bear, he uniformly refused

to receive outside assistance, even when voluntarily offered by friends and admirers.

There are only two instances in which we find him breaking his resolution. It is said, that on one occasion the patriotic zemindar Rajahs, Protap Chunder Singh and Ishur Chunder Singh, of Paikpara proposed to make him a grant of a comparatively large sum of money to reimburse his losses, and enable him to improve the *Hindoo Patriot*. But nothing tempted, he declined the kind offer, thankfully yet firmly. When, however, the type showed progressive signs of decay and complaints began to pour in, that the broken type and numerous typographical errors unduly taxed the eye of the reader, he at last consented to receive the proffered aid. Babu Hurish Chunder Mukherjee never courted the favour of any body, nor did he rely upon outside help of any description in conducting the *Patriot*, a journal the like of which can scarcely be now seen in any part of India. To notice with any approach to minuteness all his writings scattered about in the *Hindoo Patriot*, or to criticize them minutely, is impossible within the narrow compass at our command. We shall refer only to some important contributions of the great Brahmin publicist. Early in 1854 appeared a learned and philosophical article on "Hindu and European civilization—a contrast," in which he discriminated the difference between the two, proved the weak points of Europeans and defended his countrymen from the reproach of semi-barbarism. The article could not fail to attract notice, and was answered in the Anglo-Indian press, but indifferently. The superiority of the *Hindoo Patriot* in erudition and philosophy as well as in knowledge of the different systems was obvious. Without formally defending himself Hurish followed up with other articles on European, specially British sociology. Thus he compared English "Strikes" with Bengali Dharmaghats. Again he expressed his impression of the tendencies of the

British democracy in the course of a review of the "Reasoner" periodical. His articles on Annexation were not only learned, and logical but brilliant and eloquent. With his usual single-mindedness and honesty of purpose, untempted by favour and undeterred by the frown of the "Powers that be," he attacked the policy of Lord Dalhousie. Nor did he when the occasion came, ever shrink from criticising the conduct of Sir Lawrence Peel and Sir James Colville, Chief Justices of the Supreme Court. However highly he respected those high dignitaries for their talents and private virtues, he regarded them as too much of "courtier Judges." (vide the "Life of Kristo Das Pal p. 5, 6, 7, 8.)

These are the brief outlines of his great journalistic career from 1853 to 1856. The files of the *Hindoo Patriot* for this period are now irrecoverably lost to the country, as we could not find them either in the Metcalfe Hall or in any other public or private Libraries of Calcutta. And in the absence of these records, or any other authentic information about his career, it is impossible for us to say anything more on the subject.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### HIS CAREER AS A JOURNALIST DURING THE MUTINY OF 1857-58.

Hurish Chunder Mukherjee immortalized himself by his noble defence of the policy of "Clemency" during this horrible crisis. It was in May 1857 that the hurricane of the Sepoy Mutiny swept over the land. Discontent and disaffection engendered by the Imperial policy of distrust of the people in general and dispossession of the hereditary rights of some Princes were among the chief causes that brought about

this revolt, bringing in its train untold miseries to the nation. Hurish Chunder first wrote on the subject in the *Hindoo Patriot* of the 21st May, 1857.

"The horrible details of the Mutiny and massacre of which rumours and reports have reached town during the last few days have fallen upon a state of public feeling utterly unprepared to receive them even after the seditious misconduct and disbandment of two regiments of the line. It was certainly known that a spirit of disaffection pervaded the entire native army ; but there were specious reasons for supposing that it could rise to the culminating point and manifest itself by deeds only in the distant and disliked cantonments of Bengal. The favourite stations of Meerut and Delhi have, however, been the scene of mutineering violence such as has no parallel in the military history of British India. Full particulars have not yet reached Government."

In this very opening article Hurish Chunder took the side of the Government and vindicated its policy thus :—

"Government has been censured for dealing too leniently with the Mutineers in Bengal. We can scarcely conceive what other punishment than dismissal from a most desirable service could be awarded to men who at worst were misbehaving under a delusion, and were guilty of passive Mutiny only. It would have hardly been consistent with the principles and the dignity, not to mention the policy of the Indian Government, to have made every soldier of the 19th and 34th Regiments of Bengal Infantry martyrs in the eyes of their countrymen, and such they would have been, if the forfeit of their lives or liberties were exacted from them for persisting in a course of passive insubordination in obedience to what every one believes to be the dictates of his conscience."

The article was concluded thus :—"The Government may now act with a rigour proportioned to the



urgency of the case. If every native soldier who has had a hand in that appalling outrage, and who was not compelled to join it by the intimidation of his comrades, were to pay with his life the forfeit of violated duty, offence would be done neither to justice nor to sound policy."

Thus it would appear that from the very beginning of this national calamity, he took a sober, statesman-like view of the whole affair, counselled sobriety and patience to the Government, and played the part of a peace-maker between the enraged Native soldiers and the Government. The hurricane of the Mutiny increased in velocity and strength among the ignorant up-country men, partly drawn to the rank and file of the Mutineers by temptation of plunder, and partly by religious and other considerations. The official and non-official Anglo-Indians, the Eurasians, and the Native Christians naturally took alarm and confounded the Mutiny to be a general rebellion assisted by the entire native populations and Princes of India. With the gradual swell of the surging tide of the Mutiny, a deep panic arose in their mind. Hurish Chunder in his serio-comic and slashing style thus described it :—

"Never since the day on which Serajodowlah sent his Pathans into Calcutta to wrest the factory from the East India Company and put every white man to the sword or in cords, was Calcutta so beside itself with terror as at the present moment. The English have always been noted for looking danger steadily in the face. But at times an excess of caution assumes a rather ridiculous turn. The state of feeling now exhibited by the notabilities of Chowringhee and their number of satellites in Casitolah is very much akin to that which drew the laughter of the world on the aldermen of London and their militia when Boney was a stalking horse in the imagination of the British people. Within the last fortnight,

the gun-smiths have been deluged with custom, and their fortunes have been as effectually made as if the dreaded loot of Calcutta had been poured into their laps. Indeed guns, pistols, and rifles have turned up to famine prices, and many a portly citizen who never before in all his life was guilty of the least insight into the mechanism of these murderous weapons, may now be daily observed to look as fierce as a hussar, screw up his mouth, twinge his eyes, and pull away at the trigger till he grew red in the face, and the smart crack upon the cap 'warranted not to miss fire, nor fly' told the flattering tale of his invincibility." (vide *Hindoo Patriot*, May 20th., 1857.)

They therefore urged upon the Government the advisability of adopting the policy of an indiscriminate massacre of every native, be he innocent or guilty. And, moreover, they wanted to take the law into their own hands, and to deal summarily with the malcontents.

In the pages of the *Friend of India*, it was described at the time that European ladies of Calcutta fled from their houses and took refuge in the ships lying on the Ganges. The entire European and Eurasian communities were armed to the teeth, and not a man was found to go out without a pistol in his pocket. At the approach of the *Mohurrum* festival, the Anglo-Indians seriously suggested the disarmament of the entire native population of Calcutta as will be apparent from the following letter addressed by the foreman of the Grand Jury to the Judges of the Supreme Court of Calcutta :—

"At the sessions of the peace of our Lady, The Queen, holden at Calcutta on the 18th day of July, in the year 1857, the Grand jury present as follows :—That as a measure to allay apprehensions of danger on the part of the public, and for the preservation of peace and the prevention of crime, (spe-

cially as the Mahomedan Holidays, which are approaching, are usually a period of excitement) it is desirable that the Native population of Calcutta and of the suburbs should be disarmed, and that the sale of arms and ammunition should be prohibited except under such restrictions as Government may deem desirable. Therefore, the grand jury do hereby request Her Majesty's Justices to lay this their presentment and to take the same into its favourable consideration. (vide *Hindoo Patriot* July 30th, 1857.)

(Sd.) J. H. Fergusson,  
*Foreman.*

Even the sober Judges of the Supreme Court did not hesitate to recommend the measure to the Government. But Hurish Chundra contemptuously treated the idea and advised the Government not to run mad with this insane cry of its own countrymen. The safety of the empire was in danger however, and the Government was obliged to gag the Press, pass martial law, and adopt other stringent and precautionary measures. To the gagging Act Hurish Chunder did not demur, as it made no invidious distinction between the Native and the Anglo-Indian Press. Every student of history knows how Mr. Henry Mead, the Editor of the *Friend of India* who was the first transgressor of this law was rebuked, and at last "deported from the country for his famous article on "the Centenary of Plassey."

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#### THE ATROCITIES OF THE MUTINY.

If the enraged Mutineers from their bitter race hatred massacred innocent ladies and helpless children, and committed all sorts of brutal deeds and cruelties, the military authorities in India at the time were no less relentless in their vengeance. We quote what Hurish Chunder wrote on the subject :—

"It is impossible to deny that immediately after the first successes over the rebels, the work of retribution was carried a little too far, and that too in a manner not to be expected from the agents of a civilized Government. At the town of Allahabad only, nearly eight hundred men were hanged between the 6th June and 16th July. The Sikhs were let loose upon the towns people to wreak summary vengeance for the murder of a comrade. Brigadier Neill's course from Benares to Allahabad was marked by corpses of villagers all of whom did not approach his force with hostile intentions. We will not speak of other atrocities committed by soldiers over whom, if discipline had been exercised, it would have had its sway. The river sides for miles presented an array of demolished homes. That the population thus punished harboured many who deserved the severest punishment that could be inflicted, we will not deny. But the result proved that the principle of English law—that it were better that ten guilty should escape than that one innocent should suffer—errs less in respect to sound policy than the converse maxim of the blood-hunters. A renewed attack upon Benares was the consequence of the severities of Brigadier Neill's course. That chronic disaffection of the villagers and the readiness with which they have again joined the rebels on both sides of the river attest the ill effects of similar proceedings on the part of our authorities. Well may, therefore, the Governor-General caution the local authorities." (*Vide Hindoo Patriot*, September 10th, 1857.)

The Native Press then in its infancy was not strong enough, as it is now, to resist the evil influence of the combined agitation on the part of the Anglo-Indian Press and the non-official European community. Under such circumstances Hurish Chunder acted the part of a saviour of his country by rightly interpreting the views of the Natives towards the Go-

vernment and *vice versa*. He not only faithfully represented the native feeling on this subject, but, disproved, with a masterly pen, the fallacious nature of the serious allegations made against the loyalty of the Natives and Princes of India. He was host in himself, and proved himself a foeman worthy of the steel of the entire Anglo-Indian Press headed by the Serampore *Friend of India*, the *Englishman*, the *Hurkara*, and the bloody Buist of the *Bombay Gazette*. The Government of Lord Canning got a truer insight of the exact state of Native feeling towards it from his writings than from the rabid vapourings of the Anglo-Indian Press. Week after week, he wrote in the *Hindoo Patriot* masterly and clever articles on the Mutiny, with the sole object of removing misapprehensions from the mind of the Government, and sometimes with a bitter, sarcastic spirit, and at other times with sober, sound judgement and array of arguments, he convinced the Government of the arrant nonsense and malevolence that invariably disfigured the columns of the hostile Press. The consequence was that the Government saw the state of affairs in its true light, and avoided extremes. In short, Hurish Chunder stood as a mediator between the people and the Government and saved both of them from headlong ruin. We therefore call him the saviour of his country during the horrible days of the Sepoy Mutiny, and he will be known to posterity as such. The poor *Keranee* in the Military Auditor General's Office placed himself, unsolicited, as a mediator between his countrymen and the alien Government, and his mediation was accepted. What tribulations, what mental agonies and anxieties, what sacrifices this poor Brahmin publicist had to make to represent the dumb millions of his countrymen, in this crisis, it is now impossible for us adequately to delineate.

The history of the Sepoy Mutiny remains yet to be written from the national point of view, and the

important part played by men like Hurish Chunder in assuaging the rancorous feeling of hostility displayed by an infuriated body of the ruling race, partly from fear, and partly from selfish motives is now almost forgotten. Hurish Chunder had early discerned in the first outbreak of the Mutiny what Burke has magniloquently said "that in all disputes between the people and their rulers the presumption is at least upon a par in favour of the people." That the general body of the people of India had nothing to do with these insurgents' revolutionary actions which arose from their impatience of "suffering," was a most palpable fact which he sought to impress upon the rulers with all the force and vehemence of language he could command to save the Government from a catastrophe. And, after such a lapse of time, the verdict of history is that he did succeed in his noble attempt. The Anglo-Indians convulsed with rage lost their sense completely, and deliberately advised the Government to dispossess all the landholding classes in India of their lands and make them over to Europeans and Eurasians; and the chimerical proposal of making extensive English colonization was sedately put forth. And what was greatly to be deplored was that the maddened Anglo-Indians shewed every disrespect and even menace to Lord Canning, and thought of deporting him from India when he firmly refused to listen to their wicked advice. It was at such a time of general horror, uncertainty, and trepidation when the fate of the E. I. Company's Government in India was trembling in the balance, that Hurish Chunder was the steersman of the destiny of his own countrymen. His words were half-battles fought on the side of the dumb millions of India, and be it recorded to the glory of the Great British nation that, with the moral support given by this Brahmin publicist, and by such honest journalist as Mr. Robert Knight then editor of the *Bombay Times*, with the

active and loyal co-operation of Her Majesty's subjects and Princes of all classes, British statesmanship and British valour triumphed at last, and the Mutiny was suppressed. The narrow limits of our book prevent us from noticing with minuteness, all the writings of Hurish Chunder and to criticize them at an elaborate length. That requires a separate volume which we hope and trust better writers would undertake hereafter. But this much we must say that in trying to suppress the Mutiny, Hurish Chunder did not only a duty to the great British Government to which he in common with the rest of his fellow countrymen owed allegiance and a debt of deep gratitude but rendered valuable service to India, his mother country. The Mutiny may have inflicted upon this country a thousand losses but it has done some good to it as well. The Proclamation of 1858 which stands as an imperishable monument of the large-heartedness of a conquering nation towards the conquered would not have been promulgated so soon but for this execrable rising. It moreover opened the eyes of Great Britain that in order to make Britannia's rule permanent in India, the policy of distrust, of exclusion of people from offices of great trust and responsibility, and from all share in the Government of their country was a mistake. The illustrious subject of our memoir wrote an excellent article in the *Hindoo Patriot* of December 31st 1858, summarizing the evil effects of this political event, from which we extract the following.

"The year 1857 will form the date of an era unsurpassed in importance by any in the history of mankind. For us who are living in the midst of those scenes which have stamped this epochal character on the year, it is impossible to realize in its fullest measure the interest that will attach to it in the eyes of posterity. Our minds are too full of the incidents of the rebellion—of this siege and that massacre, the battle, the retreat, the ambuscade, mutinies, treacheries and treasons—they are far too agitated,—to receive a

fair image of the present. The rebellion came upon us with a shock for which no class of the community was prepared. It has taken by surprise the country—not excepting the vast body of the rebels themselves. For eight long months it has ravaged the land in its length and breadth, spreading orime and misery of every hue and form. And when now its strength has been broken and its end has made itself visible, it bids fair to leave the nation a legacy of prolonged and yet unknown troubles.” (vide Life of K. D. Pal, p. 187.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE INDIGO CRISIS IN 1860, AND HURISH CHUNDER MUKHERJEE.

The word Indigo with its Latin equivalent *Indicum* shews that it is one of the indigenous products of this country as much as rice or sugar-cane. As regards its superior quality, it has been stated in the report of the Indigo Commission that “the Indigo manufactured” in Lower Bengal, especially in Jessore and Nuddea, “is probably the very finest in the whole world;” and that the “annual outturn” of it in the year preceding the crisis in Bengal and Behar was 1,05,000 maunds valued at about two millions sterling. We cite these figures to shew what enormous sums of money was in circulation among the people of the Indigo districts and benefitted them in more ways than one. With this money, large tracts of uncultivated lands, marshes and pestilential jungles were reclaimed, ponds and tanks were excavated, roads were made, Bazars established, schools opened, and dispensaries flourished wherever the English Indigo Planters settled, since the beginning of this century. But these indirect advantages derived from the system of indigo cultivation were gradually eclipsed by the intolerable disadvantages which made the ryots



quite sick of it. Rank oppressions on the part of the majority of Indigo planters and its menial and factory servants exasperated the people and led them to rise in revolt. The Reverend Alexander Duff, the Prince of Missionaries in India, in his memorable letter to the President of the Indigo Commission said "that such discontent, as the natural result of oppression, did exist long previously, is surely the conclusion which every candid and impartial mind must deduce from the *tout-ensemble* of the miscellaneous evidence given before the Commission." (vide p. 4 Appendix No. III. I. C. R.) The cultivation of indigo became unremunerative, and the ryots refused to have anything to do with it. A dispute thus arose between the vast body of agricultural and land-holding classes in Bengal and the great influential planting English community having prestige and power of its own. Some 20 lacs of poor ryots of the districts of Nuddea, Jessore, Rajshaye, Pubna and the 24-Pargunnahs combined and resolved, even at the sacrifice of their hearth and home, nay of their lives, not to cultivate their lands with indigo, nor to enter into any fresh contract with the planters for the same. And they stuck to their resolution even to the bitterest end. Such a gigantic combination of the tillers of the soil, men inured to all sorts of hardships but less prone to grumble and grudge, steeped in deep ignorance but free from the European vice of drunkenness and disorderliness, has no parallel in the history of India except the disastrous Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Burke in his famous speech has very rightly said that all such popular risings must have their origin in oppression; and the ryots of Lower Bengal goaded by the unbearable tyranny of the White Planters of Bengal rose *enmasse* against them and threatened them with utter extinction and ruin. The ruin was tantamount to a loss of enormous British capital invested in the numberless Indigo concerns studded over the country; it meant

their loss of prestige, power, and position. In this awful predicament, the planters, instead of adopting a conciliatory course, as Dr. Duff very rightly observed at the time, they should have done, made their position worse by taking recourse to harsher measures with a view to coerce the refractory ryots into submission. They took the law into their own hands, kidnapped the ring-leaders of the ryots, kept them illegally confined in low, moist godowns for days together, burnt villages and Bazars (market places), knocked down houses of the poor ryots, forcibly took away their cattles, wounded men sometimes, and outraged and ill-treated women. And it is our duty as an impartial writer of history to say that in the commission of these crimes, the aggrieved ryots did not suffer all these numerous wrongs without giving *tit for tat*. But being the weaker party in the contest, their sufferings were great and sometimes exceeded the limits of human patience. They were no match for the combined strength of the great planting community which ostensibly counted upon and actually received the sympathy, direct or indirect, from the Government as well as from the European civilians holding sway over the different districts of Bengal. The isolated body of civilians residing in the out-of-the-way places in the Mofusil received hospitality from their planter friends and close friendship naturally existed between them. The Government, on the other hand, from a political point of view considering that the residence of non-official Europeans in the interior, would, in hours of danger serve as a safeguard, did every thing that lay in its power to foster the interests of the planting community. Such being the case, the natural conscious superiority of the ruling race of which the Indigo Planters formed a part and parcel, conjoined with the sympathy they were sure to expect from the governing class, led the planters, as a general rule, to become more oppressive than before.

The late lamented Babu Sree Gopal Pal Chowdry, Zemindar of Ranaghat and the father of Babu Surendra Nath Pal Chowdry in his deposition before the Commission said in answer to the question put by Babu Chundra Mohun Chatterjea, the representative of the B. I. Association on the Commission,—why did he give lease of his property to the planters—"that my first reason is the inequality of the laws ; the planters enjoy equal rights with us, but they are not amenable to the local courts. For similar offences Zemindars would be imprisoned, when the Europeans would be fined. Besides the officials usually help the planters ; therefore we are all anxious to avoid collision with planters, to prevent affrays and disgrace. Besides, I know, for certain, if an European Assistant planter who holds a lease from us, is summoned into Court, he will get a chair near the Magistrate, while we, the Zemindars, who created the lease, will have to stand at a distance." (Vide p. 92 Minutes of the evidence taken before the Indigo Commission at Krishnaghur.)

It was at this hideous and appalling crisis of an agrarian rising of the entire mass of the agricultural people of Bengal, that Hurish Chunder came to their rescue and fought their battles, almost single handed in the public press. Week after week, month after month, he, with marvellous courage, thorough comprehensiveness and grasp of the intricate relations between the ryots and planters, dwelt in the columns of the *Hindoo Patriot*, on the manifold grievances and hardships endured by the former. The scene of the conflict is now changed from the wide plains of Bengal to the forum of public opinion as represented in the Press. In a constitutional form of Government such as that we have the privilege of enjoying, the momentous issues involved in this hideous conflict were to be decided by the unbiased public opinion created and moulded by the Press. The

leader of the Native Press at the time took the side of the down-trodden peasantry and, sometimes with sarcasm, and at other times with sobriety and sound-sense, irrefragable logic, and incontrovertible statement of facts, he kept at bay the aggressive hostile party and helped the Government to judge of the affair in a calm and impartial spirit. Impossible as it is for us within the short compass of this concise general biography, to quote *in extenso* from his marvellous writings on this subject, we remain content with making the following extract from an article written on the Indigo crisis by the subject of our memoir and published in our Life of the Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal.

“*Anarchy in Bengal.*—They speak what is literally a truth who speak of the prevalence of anarchy in some of the districts of Bengal. It is anarchy when a few men, by the mere force of the strong arm lord it over millions, and bar them from the benefits of government. The external show of courts, policemen, and officials, is a mockery in regions where the oppressed man cannot approach the law but by permission of his oppressor. It is anarchy there where partialism is an institution for the maintenance of which its patrons openly contend with legislature—where the iron will, the brave heart, and brute force will ensure their possessor complete supremacy.

And why should it be so? These districts, the seat of this anarchy, are within eyesight of a Government the strongest in Asia. The people are a race who require the least amount of government to keep their society together. It is a country of old traditions, which has known regular laws and courts of justice for nearly a century. One single tax of four millions is borne by the people themselves to the public exchequer with a punctuality not observed by the seasons. Religion reigns in the land with

more than ordinary force. And yet there is anarchy in Bengal." (Vide Life of K. D. Pal p. 192.)

## CHAPTER V.

### [HIS EVIDENCE BEFORE THE INDIGO COMMISSION.

The battle he waged and successfully fought against the tyranny and wrong-doings of the planters had at last the effect of inducing the Government to appoint a Commission to make an enquiry into, and report upon, the matter under Act XI. of 1860. Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr, Esq., c. s., and Mr. (afterwards Sir) Richard Temple, c. s., represented the Government, Mr. W. F. Fergusson, Esq, the planting community, the Reverend Mr. J. Sale, the missionaries, while the late Babu Chundra Mohun Chatterjee was the mouth-piece of the British Indian Association. Among the numerous witnesses summoned and examined by the Commission, Babu Hurish Chunder was one, and he deposed as follows:—

Monday, 30th July, 1860.

#### PRESENT.

W. S. Seton-Karr, Esq., c. s., President.

#### MEMBERS.

W. F. Fergusson Esq. | Reverend J. Sale.

Babu Chundra Mohun Chatterjee.

Babu Hurish Chunder Mukherjee, of Bhowanipur, in the district of the 24-Pergunnahs, called in and examined on oath.

President.] What situation do you hold?—I am a clerk in the service of Government in the Military Auditor General's office.

You are the editor of the *Hindoo Patriot*?—I do not hold myself the responsible editor of the paper, but I have sufficient influence with the Proprietor to make him adopt any tone of policy I deem fit.

You have had occasion to watch with interest the late Indigo crisis, have you not?—Yes. During the crisis, have any ryots, or other parties applied to you for advice?—Yes, numerous persons, zemindars, middle men, and ryots have come to me for advice from several districts. They applied to me personally.

Will you state the questions on which they generally come to seek your advice?—Before the Act for the summary enforcement of Indigo cultivation was passed, the point on which the majority of ryots sought my advice was, how they could best avoid sowing; after the Act was passed the point on which they chiefly sought my advice, was how they could best resist the coercitory measures taken under it. Latterly, the point that they have generally sought my advice on is, how they can avoid taking advances, and being made to grow Indigo next year. Besides these there have been particular cases in which I have assisted them with advice and written out petitions and applications to various authorities.

Can you state the general line of advice that you gave to the ryots on the points above referred to?—I invariably advised them to apply to the district authorities in the proper form for redress, and to go to the next appellate authority, if they found no redress at the hands of the district authorities. I cautioned them against ever committing any breaches of the peace, or committing themselves in any manner by acting illegally. I explained to them that the operation of the Act was temporary, and that better measures would be devised next year, when I was sure they would be free to take or not to take advances. I generally advised them to seek for redress in the civil courts, a mode of proceeding which I found was much less resorted to, than it should have been. I mean the Act for damages.

As Editor of a paper published in English, and therefore likely to be read by Englishmen, had you many communications by letter from parties in the Mofussil detailing their grievances, and asking for your advice?—All letters addressed to the *Patriot* were received and opened by me, and many of them contained statements of the kind referred to in the question.

Are you in a position to state whether more letters of the kind

would be likely to come to you, than would be likely to come to a paper printed in the vernacular, say the *Bhaskur*?—The probability is, that more letters of the kind were addressed to the Editor of the *Hindoo Patriot* than to the editor of any vernacular journal.

Have you at any time visited any of the great Indigo Districts yourself, for instance Jessore, Krishnaghur, or Moorshedabad, and are you personally known to many residents of those districts?—No, I have never visited any Indigo district, except Baraset and Hooghly. I am personally known to many inhabitants of the Nuddea district, and to some of Rajshaye, and to some of Mymensing, having made their acquaintance in Bhowanipur.

During the late indigo crisis have you had occasion to depute any person or persons into the interior, in search of accurate information regarding the state of the districts?—Not especially for the purpose of news. I have recommended legal agents to the ryots to carry on these cases who have acted as correspondents of the *Hindoo Patriot* then; I have received accurate information from time to time respecting every proceeding or occurrence of any note, from persons in the district.

Mr. Fergusson.] But did you send from this the legal agents whom you recommended the ryots to employ?—The ryots took them up from here. I settled for one of them the terms on which they were to act as *Muktear*. This was at a time, when I was told that no *Muktear* in the district of Krishnaghur, except in the Sudder Station, could be induced to take up a ryot's case, in consequence of a *Muktear*, Jitu Chatterjee, practising in the Damurhoda (now Chooadanga) Sub-division, having been imprisoned on an alleged charge of having instigated the ryots.

President.] Then you can distinctly state that you never deputed emissaries with directions to go from *Thannah* to *Thannah*, or village to village, pointing out to the ryots the line they ought to take?—I distinctly deny having done so, and thank the Commission for having given me this opportunity of making this denial.

Mr. Sale.] Can you state how many of these legal agents went from Calcutta to the Indigo districts with your knowledge, to what district they went, and what was the nature of the understanding you

had with them, previous to their going ?—Three in all, to the Nuddea district only. The understanding was, that they should act as *Muktears* for the ryots who should pay them.

Mr. Fergusson.] Did you prepare or assist in preparing circular notices respecting Indigo, which were said to be distributed in the villages of the Nuddea district ?—I know nothing of them, nor have I ever seen them.

Mr. Sale.] You have stated that after the passing of the summary Act, some of the ryots asked you how they could best resist the coercionary measures taken under it ; did they wish to know how they could resist the operation of the Act itself, or did they desire to resist the coercionary measures taken under the color of the Act ?—The ryots wished to know how they could resist the operation of the Act generally. I could only advise them how to resist the fearful amount of oppression committed under cover of that Act, by officials as well as planters.

What, kind of oppression do you refer to ?—Imprisonment in large numbers in low, filthy, narrow godowns, breaking into houses, plunder of property, insult of women by officers of Police of various grades, instigated by the planters.

Mr. Fergusson.] Do you believe that these things have been done under Act XI of 1860 ?—I do, after having made enquiries of every kind in my power as to the fact of imprisonment ; it has been judicially established that cases of the kind did occur.

President.] Are you aware that since the passing of the Act, the Government of Bengal has exercised close supervision over local authorities in order to prevent injustice or oppression being perpetrated under its color ?—For the first two or three after the passing of the Act, the supervision of the Government of Bengal was not such as to prevent the provisions of the Act being extensively abused. Since then a closer supervision prevails.

Babu C. M. Chatterjee.] It has been stated by Mr. Larmour before the Commission, that there has been a feeling of jealousy between the members of the British Indian Association and Indigo Planters on account of some of the Members of the latter being vested with the powers of Honorary Magistrate by the late Lieutenant-



Governor Mr. Halliday, now Sir Frederick. As a Member of the British Indian Association, do you wish to say anything?—Mr. Larmour's statement is not strictly correct. The Association is composed of Members of varied politics. Some of them are friendly towards the Planters, others are hostile towards them. The Association did address the Lieutenant-Governor on the inexpediency of the appointments at the time they were made, and I beg to file a copy of the Association's address on the subject dated 29th August, 1857.

President.] During the late discussions on Indigo, have you thought it your duty to form and to express a clear opinion on the several questions at issue, affecting the welfare of a large portion of the native population?—I have studied the question with care, and have no doubt in stating that the present system of Indigo cultivation is injurious to the ryots in every way; on all points arising out of these questions, I have formed definite opinions which I have taken every opportunity to express. On one point only I have not been able to form an opinion, viz., what are to be the future relations between ryot and planter. (vide p. 45, 46, 47. I. C. Report.)

We have not space enough left to comment upon and criticize the evidence of Hurish Chunder. That his demeanour as a witness was bold, straightforward, and respectful will be apparent to all who take the trouble of reading the above extract. But the only point in his evidence which seems mysterious to us is his quibbling statement about his identity as the editor of the *Hindoo Patriot*. For what reasons, he veiled his editorship from the public we do not know, but that was perhaps more owing to his official position and to the threatening attitude the planters assumed towards him than to any want of candour on his part.

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THE MISSIONARIES, THE FEW CIVILIANS, AND  
NATIVE GENTLEMEN AS HIS CO-ADJUTORS  
IN THE INDIGO CRISIS.

In this meagre sketch of the hero of the Indigo crisis, we should be wanting in our duty, were we not to allude to the valuable help rendered by these men to the cause of the emancipation of the Indigo slaves, as the ryots were called at the time, in conjunction and co-operation with the illustrious Hurish. The first and foremost among the friends of the ryots was that noble band of Christian missionaries to whose benevolent exertions as pioneers of English education in this country, and as chief nourishers of the growth and development of the vernacular Press in India we owe a debt immense of endless gratitude. It was these angelic human beings, notably among them the late lamented Reverend James Long, the Reverend C. Bomwetsch, then a missionary of the C. M. Society at Santipur, the late Rev. C. H. Blumhardt, of the same Society at Krishnaghur, the Rev. F. Schurr and others, casting aside all race prejudices, without fear or favor, unswayed by any consideration of friendship, kinsmanship, or racial relationship, united in a body, condemned in no uncertain sound and language, the really reprehensible and ruthless course pursued by the Indigo Planters of Bengal. Every student of history must know, or at least is supposed to know, how that sincere friend of Bengal peasants—we mean the late Rev. James Long, was incarcerated in the Presidency Jail of Calcutta for no other fault than that, he, as a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, thought it to be his prime duty to translate into English, the great Bengali drama entitled the "Neel Durpana" or the "Mirror of Indigo Scandals," which the late Babu Dino Bondhu Mitter wrote at the time. The other missionaries, particularly the Rev. Mr. Bomwetsch wrote a series of scathing letters to the *Hindoo*

*Patriot*, *Phoenix*, and *Hurkura*, and denounced the conduct of the men of his own race.

Then were those few noble-hearted civilians of old bye-gone days, and prominent among them were Sir John, Peter Grant, the late Sir Ashley Eden, W. J. Herschel, Esq., E. De Latour Esq., c. s., then district Judge of the 24-Pergunahs, and Mr. Tottenham now a High Court Judge of Calcutta. And these honest, upright civilians, without any political consideration, set a stern face against the wrong-doings of the oppressors. It was Sir Ashley Eden, be it recorded to his credit, who issued the famous *Parwanna* from the sub-district of Baraset, declaring to the ryots that they were free agents, and that the cultivation of Indigo was quite optional with them. And at last we find the few educated Native gentlemen who supplied Hurish Chunder with authentic facts about the Indigo oppressions, as his *muffasil* correspondents. The late Babu Dino Bondhoo Miter, Babu Radhika Prasuna Mukherjee, then Deputy-Inspector of Schools at Nuddea, Babu Grish Chunder Bose, then a Police Daroga of Krishnaghur, Mr. Manoh Mohun Ghose, then a student of Krishnaghur, and several other gentlemen anonymously wrote to the *Hindoo Patriot*, on this all-absorbing topic of the day.

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#### HIS CHARACTER.

Self-sacrifice and self-abnegation were the great guiding principle and motto of his life. All through out his marvellous but short career in life he made tremendous sacrifices for the sake of his countrymen. His public career began in 1853 and came to an abrupt and lamentable close in 1861; and within this comparatively short period when the whole of India passed through the fiery ordeal of a Revolution second in importance only to the one of France, and when in

Bengal, its millions of cultivators and land-holders waged a regular crusade against the White Planters, it was this poor Brahmin clerk who made sacrifice of his time and money for the good of his mother country. For full eight years he conducted the *Hindoo Patriot* at a cost ruinous to himself without reward or recompense from those whom he served so nobly. Calculating the average cost of printing and publishing this hebdomadal of small circulation at Rs. 100 per mensem at the lowest, it would not be too much to say that Hurish Chunder spent more than Rupees 10,000 for this purpose alone within the short space of 8 years of his editorial life. Every farthing of this money was saved with the utmost economy from his small earnings as a clerk, and spent for conducting the journal for public good. Then again during the Indigo crisis, he not only helped the poor ryots, as he deposed before the Indigo Commission, by drafting petitions and memorials for them, but fed them, protected them, and befriended them in every possible way. His house at Bhowanipur became an asylum for them, and they sung the rural ballad in great glee all over the wide fields of Bengal that "One Hurish saved us while another Hurish (a servant of an Indigo factory) killed." Over and above these, consider, gentle reader! what tremendous sacrifice he made for these poor ryots at the close of his career. In 1860, some twelve months before his final departure from this world of sorrows, the Indigo Planters instituted criminal and civil suits against him for what he had written on behalf of the poor ryots against the oppressions perpetrated upon them. He knew perfectly well that neither his countrymen nor the ryots would help him in the hour of trial. One word of apology from him would have satisfied the enraged planters of Bengal. Yet he manfully stood to his gun and refused to recant his words. The consequence was that the Planters got a decree against

him from the Subordinate Judge of Alipur, and his house was attached and put to the auctioneer's hammer. All this took place immediately after his death; but he knew all this before he shuffled off the mortal coil. He died on the memorable day of 16th June, 1861, at the early age of 36, leaving his widow, mother and a brother as so many beggars in the streets of Bhowanipur. Every farthing Hurish Chunder spent in helping the ryots, and conducting his pet journal robbed his poor surviving mother and wife of the provision he should have made for them; and Hurish Chunder did this knowingly, for in his eyes the claims of his countrymen and of the poor Indigo serfs of Bengal upon him were held superior to those of his surviving relatives. Gentle reader! if this is not self-sacrifice in its noblest and highest feature, we do not know what it is. Hurish Chunder will live in the pages of history as a great lover of his country or his love stood the test and was found genuine. He sacrificed his self, his pleasures, peace, comfort, health and what not at the altar of his country. As long as the memory of the Mutiny and the Indigo crisis will last, so long Hurish will be remembered as the benefactor of his country, and the people of Bengal will rue his untimely death in the language of our Poet.

"Untimely did Hurish die, and Long was sent to prison, and the golden Bengal was set on fire by blue planters."

The following letter kindly addressed to us by Babu Raj Narain Bose of the Adi Brahma Somaj will throw further light on the character of Hurish Chunder.

(1) "Hurish was once travelling in a railway carriage with a friend seated opposite the bench on which he was. A military gentleman was on the bench on which Hurish sat and stretched forth his leg towards that on which Hurish's friend was, placing it close to his body. Hurish beckoned him

to come to the side on which he sat. On his doing the same, he occupied his friend's seat on the other side, and stretched his leg towards the great son of Mars with the greatest *sangfroid*: imaginable as if he were the Viceroy, or rather the Governor-General, there being no Viceroy at the time. The military gentleman went down from the carriage at the next station, muttering: "Let me be damned if I ever enter a railway carriage without a pair of pistols in my pocket."

(2) Hurish being a practical man was still very fond of metaphysics and highly conversant with that branch of knowledge. This was an astonishing trait of his mind. I had a talk with him in 1859 about my "Dharma Tuttwa Dipika" or the "Lamp of Religious Truth" which is a highly metaphysical work on the subject of the philosophy of religion, and very much appreciated in Brahmo circles. On that occasion he told me that he did not know that a man breaks down so early as thirty-five (he was of that age at the time) in Bengal, but his decline is to be attributed more to his free indulgence in the wine cup and his excessive mental exertion than to the climate of our country.

(3) His generous office master (I forget his name, he was a military gentleman) wanted to fit up the room in which he worked during his office hours in a grand style, but he modestly declined the kind offer saying "The Bengalee needs very little in the shape of luxury."

(4) His mother was a very kind lady. She used to cook with her own hands food for the poor ryots who freely flocked to Hurish's house to represent their grievances to him, and he offered his assistance to them very liberally.

(5) Some of his neighbours at Bhowanipur were very jealous of his success and used to say that it required but a common stock of attainments to edit a newspaper. Alas! they were ignorant what a giant they had in their midst.

(6) Anglo-Indians at the time of the Mutiny used to abuse

the natives very grossly and characterized their conduct as "Asiatic perfidy." Hurish silenced them with a spicy remark in the *Hindoo Patriot*, "Jesus was an Asiatic."

(7) "Hurish was a Brahmo in his religion."

The late Babu Ram Gopal Ghose paid the following tribute of praise in his speech at his memorial meeting held on the 12th July 1861.

"He had the honour of the acquaintance of Hurish Chunder Mookerjee for the last 10 years. The first time he met him, it struck him that he was a man of latent genius which was just developing itself. And his genius did develop itself most remarkably. His connection with the British Indian Association did it an immense deal of good. The resignation of Babu Prosonno Coomarr Tagore left a gap which was ably filled by Hurish Chunder. He (the speaker) had been a good deal accustomed to committee work, and had noticed that members of a committee were usually divided into two sections, one of which did the work and the other merely concurred and Hurish belonged to the former. He never complained of work, candle light, or no candle light. As the editor of the *Hindoo Patriot* he rendered invaluable services to the cause of native amelioration and advancement. When that paper was first started, a great question came under discussion, namely, the Charter Act. In the elucidation of that measure he took an active and prominent part. Subsequently when the Mutiny broke out, the *Patriot* proved at once source of strength both to the country and to the State. They were all aware, and they could not shut their eyes to the fact, that that enormous evil had created a great antagonistic feeling between the two nations. He would say as little as possible on that irritating subject, but he could not help saying, that here their friend stemmed the tide with a bold front, and at the same time endeavoured in every possible way to promote allegiance to the Crown throughout the land. He admired the singleness of the purpose to which he was devoted—a

singleness which he believed was deep seated and unwavering. \* \* \* \*

• All his time was taken up in writing petitions and calling upon his wealthy friends to advocate the cause of the poor. That was a bright trait in his character. Now that he was gone, it behoved them to do something to perpetuate his memory. In a country like this, and under a Government such as they had, it was impossible to expect native talent and native genius to be appreciated and promoted. They were not living in a free country ; or under a representative government. He did not find fault with the existing rule ; perhaps it was the best they could have under present circumstances ; but with an exclusive Civil Service and no outlet for career there was no stimulus to exertion. It was therefore extraordinary, that a man of Hurish Chunder's circumstances, could have done so much as he did. On one occasion it was proposed that they should depute a special native agent to England. Hurish was consulted, and they all thought he was the best person whom they could depute. He did make up his mind and he would have gone, had not, as they were all aware, social ties and social customs prevented his doing so. That ponderous machinery—caste—has unfortunately been a bar to their improvement and advancement, and owing to that mischievous clog he was obliged to forego a career which would have led him on to fame and fortune. The good government of his country was always uppermost in his thoughts, and he made the promotion of it his life work. He could not find words to describe how thoroughly devoted was Hurish to make himself useful to his country. His pecuniary circumstances were not of a very cheering character. Though an unprofessional man and not a Regulation lawyer, his intelligence and his remarkable penetration would have made him a first rate pleader in the Sudder Court. He (the speaker) had once urged him to follow the line of business, he himself had been engaged in for the last



30 years. In reply Hurish had said that his master (he did not know the name of the gentleman) had been kind to him, (the speaker was informed that it was Colonel Champneys) and that if he were to follow the business of a lawyer or a merchant, he would have to devote all his time to his desk. "I have," added he, "no money to give ; only my time and my labour." the reply was characteristic ; it at once spoke the man.

Mr. Montriou here related, in corroboration of the testimony borne by Baboo Ramgopal Ghose to the deliberation, and self-sacrificing character and habits of Hurish Chunder. A circumstance which occurred some years ago, when an honorable and lucrative but secondary position was offered to him in connection with the public press, and the speaker had pointed out that, having created a field and a kingdom for himself (*viz*, the *Hindoo Patriot*) he should not forsake it to become even the prime minister of another sovereign, and that a day, afterwards Hurish Chunder accosted him with the phrase—"you have conquered"—and he accordingly remained at his post. The speaker remarked, 'that Hurish Chunder was not, as many have been, made by or for an occasion ; he was equal to all occasions. Those who observed him closely, could not but acknowledge, that his superiority was intrinsic, and must have shown itself at any time and in any place. "If you plant an oak in a garden of cucumbers, it will still grow up an oak and spread aloft its branches."

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LIFE OF BABU SHYAMA CHURN SIRKAR, THE  
AUTHOR OF BYABASTHA DURPANA,  
BYABASTHA CHANDRIKA  
AND OTHER WORKS.

## CHAPTER I.

### HIS BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

The life of this great Brahmin scholar and eminent jurist is pregnant with valuable lessons which every Indian student ought to lay to heart and profit by. If in the pages of European biographical literature, hosts of eminent men are to be found who have risen from low circumstances in life to the proud position of a scholar, lawyer, and jurist, we have our own Shyama Churn who, from dire poverty rose to a very high position in the service of the Government, and achieved great renown as a scholar of no ordinary repute. Like every self-made man, he had to pass through the "apprenticeship of difficulty," privations and poverty which called forth all his latent powers and energies, chastened and disciplined him to rise as a great man.

Babu Shyama Churn Sirkar was born in March 1814, not in his own ancestral village of Mamjoani, situated on the river *Mathabhanga* (otherwise called *Churni*) in the district of Nuddea, but in the town of Purneah, where his father Babu Hur Narain Sirkar (alias Hur Chunder) held the office of Dewan of the Estate of Rani Indravaty. The little beautiful village of Mamjoani is situated, some seven miles to the south-east corner of the town of Krishnaghur, the head-quarters of the Nuddea District. The family title "Sirkar" (Superintendent, or Dewan, a title of respect bestowed on a person of high rank) is said to have been conferred upon his ancestors who serv-

ed with distinction under the Newab Nazims of Moorshedabad. His great-grand-father Babu Romakant Sirkar migrated from Krishnaghur and settled at Mamjoani. While Shyama Churn was only five years old, his father came to Calcutta as Dewan of one Mr. Charles Reid, a Eurasian Zemindar of Purneah and there died of carbuncle. His father was a man of great liberality, and like every pious Hindu of those days, spent almost every thing he had earned in charity and religious performances, and left very little for the support of his poor widow and his only son Shyama Churn. On his death-bed, some friends enquired of him, "what would become of your son?" and he replied like a pious Hindu: "What! Is there no God? The same God who has provided for me would watch over and bless my son." And the forebodings of the father were fulfilled to the very letter. Almighty God blessed Shyama Churn with an iron constitution, indomitable courage, great patience, and presence of mind, and above all an unconquerable will to struggle with the bitterest circumstances in life; and he succeeded, by exercise of these manly virtues, to become one of the most distinguished men of Bengal. What little competence the father left to the family, was lost through successive robberies committed in their house. In those days of the unsettled period of British administration, security of life and property was unknown to the rural population of Bengal. Under these adverse circumstances, it is no wonder that the poor little boy Shyama Churn and his mother led a very miserable existence.

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## CHAPTER II.

### HIS EDUCATION

His education, as a matter of course, was neglected, for in those days schools for education were not to

be found in rural circles except in the great towns of the different districts of Bengal. The boy, therefore, remained in complete ignorance, till the memorable 14th year of his age. It was at this time, it is said, he accidentally came to the great historic town of Krishnaghur, and remained there with one Huro Chunder Sirkar, a relation of his. Huro Chunder, though not in affluent circumstances took pity on the poor boy, allowed him to remain in his house, and encouraged him to study Persian, the language of the Courts, the courtiers, and the *elite* of the community at the time. This was the initial turning point in the famous career of Shyama Churn. At that time, there was a great Persian scholar by the name of Babu Sree Nath Lahiry, an uncle of the renowned moral man of Bengal,—we mean Babu Ram Tonoo Lahiry of Krishnaghur; and it was this great Hindu Moulvi, taking compassion upon poor Shyama Churn, consented to give him a gratuitous education in Persian. In those dark days, learned *savants* like Babu Sreenath Lahiry used to take great delight in imparting an eleemosynary education to poor boys. The educated people had not known yet how to make a trade of the profession of teaching. The poor recipient of this gratuitous education shewed all the necessary qualities of a student—the qualities of earnestness, application, patience and industry—in acquiring an elementary knowledge of that language. *Pundnama* was the first elementary book that he read, and within a few months finished it. He then obtained a manuscript copy of *Gulistan* from a neighbour, and copied it out for his use. He borrowed books from the sons of the rich Chowdhry Zemindar families of Krishnaghur and copied them out with his own hand and read them very carefully. The relatives and rich neighbouring friends of the well-known Lahiry and Chowdhry families no doubt took great pity on him and sometimes asked him to dinner. But

the young boy then growing into manhood, had scarcely sufficient food in a day, and in order to sustain himself, and to appease his appetite whetted by hard labour, he had to live regularly on soaked gram, which he regularly took as his tiffin. Sweetmeats, of which our school-boys are so much very fond, and for the regular supply of which they sometimes mulct their guardians, were rare things to poor Shyama Churn. In those days of so-called uncivilized state of Hindu society, such luxuries were not only beyond the reach of those who were well-to-do, but could be scarcely had in *Bazars*, either for love or money, unless specially ordered for. In those days of inartificial life, Hindu boys used to take their bellyful of rice, and baked rice mixed with *goor* or mollasses as tiffin. But such was the indigent and doleful circumstance in which Providence placed young Shyama Churn, that even rice in sufficient quantity he could not get. In this state he remained for full six years at Krishnaghur, prosecuting his studies with the Hindu *savant* Babu Sreenath Lahiry. It was during this period he came in contact with Babu Ram Tonoo Lahiry whose paternal dwelling house was situated close to the house of his relative Huro Chunder Sirkar. The friendship thus contracted proved a boon to him in his after life, as we shall relate hereafter. It may not be amiss here to mention that when Shyama Churn in process of time became a rich man, he, as a mark of deep gratitude towards his old master, provided his son Omesh Chunder Lahiry with a suitable employment in the Calcutta High Court, and paid regularly stated sums of money to the widow and children of his deceased tutor. He used to read day and night, never giving a moment's rest to his mind and body. His assiduity, coupled with simplicity, soon won the love of the neighbours. At night he had not the means of providing a oil-lamp for himself, and so he went to the house of the Chowdries and read in their *boitukhanas*. For want

of authentic information on this subject which, it is now impossible to obtain, any attempt on our part to give a faithful description of the vicissitudes of fortune, the sufferings and sacrifices made by this intelligent youth, can not but prove abortive.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### HIS MIGRATION TO CALCUTTA.

It was not till his twentieth year that he came down to Calcutta in search of an employment. Mr. Charles Reid, the Eurasian Zemindar and his father's employer, happened to reside at Kidderpur, and it was this gentleman who employed him as a Munshi, on a salary of Rs. 10 per mensem for the management of certain suits he had been carrying on as an agent in the late Sudder Dewany Court. The distress of his family consisting of his mother and sisters, now reached its culminating point. The family had hitherto lived upon the charity of the Maharajah of Bejoygobind of Purneah, but for reasons not known to us, the scanty monthly allowance was discontinued at this time. And we can easily imagine to what a pitiable condition the family was reduced solely relying upon the precarious income that accrued from the few *bighas* of *lakhraj* lands, they had in Momjoani. The boy struggled on and made a persistent effort to improve his condition but to no purpose. After serving Mr. Charles Reid for a year or so scruples of conscience made him sever his connexion with his Master under the following circumstance. Mr. Charles Reid dismissed one Moni Lal Khota his treasurer, from his service, and this dismissed servant brought a suit against his employer for arrears of pay. Babu Shyama Churn was cited as a witness in the case, and lest he should be tempted to give a false evidence in the case, in favour of

his master, it is said that he gave up his appointment. Whether he voluntarily did so, or under some sort of compulsion, it is impossible now to ascertain. He now found himself utterly helpless without any one to back him. Calcutta was then a veritable Golgotha, especially for a stranger to live in without the help of friends. It was at this time he introduced himself to his good friend Babu Ram Tonoo Lahiry and his two younger brothers Babu Kally Churn and Sree Prosad who were then prosecuting their studies in the Hindoo College. Babu Ram Tonoo was then a senior scholar, drawing a stipend from the Hindoo College. Kind-hearted as these brothers were by nature, and perhaps from a Hindu feeling of love towards this poor neighbour whose ancestors were held in high esteem by them, Babu Ram Tonoo allowed him to remain in his lodgings. The biographer who is himself a son-in-law of these Lahiry brothers (Babu Sree Prosad's) has heard an anecdote from his revered uncle-in-law, Babu Kally Churn Lahiry, regarding the behaviour of poor Shyama Churn as their gratuitous co-lodger. These brothers used to cook their own food and manage other domestic business themselves, as they were too poor to pay for the luxury of having a cook and a servant under them. Poor Shyama Churn and these Lahiry brothers used to do all these business by turns. Shyama Churn being then a young man of about 21, with a robust and an iron constitution used to fetch water in large earthen pots (or *Kalsis*), one on his head and the other on his loins from the very tank in College Square, round which, our University graduates and school-boys take their evening constitutional in every fashionable style. Boys Kally Churn and Sree Prosad, being yet in their teens, used to accompany Shyama Churn—the drawer of water—with smaller earthen pots to help him. What he did afterwards we describe in the

words of the *Indian Mirror*, of the 13th December, 1879 :—

“This young gentleman (Babu Ram Tonoo) with characteristic kindness provided Shama Churn with accommodation in his own lodgings and advised him to engage in the study of English, to which he still further stimulated by the acquaintance he then formed with such intelligent and enlightened friends and college-fellows of Babu Ram Tonu, as the late Babu Ram Gopal Ghose, Babu Peary Chand Mittra, and other gentlemen. Shama Churn was about 21 years of age when he began to learn the alphabet and rudiments of the English language. Feeling, however, that it was incumbent on him to make some provision for the support of his poor mother and sisters in his native village, Shama Churn, besides supplying his wants and prosecuting his studies, sought out, in the course of his evening walks on the *maidan*, then, as now, the resort of the *elite* of Calcutta, such gentlemen as were likely to engage his services as a Munshi, or Pundit, in learning the vernacular languages of India. In this way, he was fortunate enough in securing a few pupils. About this time too he was engaged by the late Mr. P. S. D’Rozario, the bookseller, to translate into Bengali and Urdu a pocket dictionary which Mr. (now Sir) Charles Trevelyan wished to be published in the Roman character. His services as a Munshi or Pundit were recommended by the late Babu Ram Gopal Ghose to many European mercantile gentlemen who were desirous of learning the Native languages on their first arrival in this country. Shama Churn’s labour connected with the Dictionary brought him into contact with Sir Charles Trevelyan, who appointed him as his own Munshi, and employed him in the preparation of several Urdu works, printed in the Roman character. Although his time was so engrossed with work after his arrival in Calcutta, Shama Churn continued his study of the Persian and Urdu languages under Moulvi Abdur-Ruhim of Delhi, who was re-



garded as the best Persian and Urdu scholar of the day, but who had unfortunately come to be looked upon by the Mussulmans as *Duhriah*, or an atheist, in consequence of his disbelief of the prophet."

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#### SHYAMA CHURN AS A PUNDIT IN THE CALCUTTA MADRASSA

"In July, 1837, shortly before Sir Charles Trevelyan's return to England, Shama Churn was appointed Pundit of the Calcutta Madrassa, where he attended from 6 to 10 A.M. Here he continued to serve for about six years, during which period he studied Arabic under two of the best professors of that Institution, namely, Moulvi Ghayasuddin, the then Head Professor, and Moulvi Abdur-Ruhim of Lucknow, professor of Arabic, both of the Madrassa. With a view to the prosecution of his English studies, he tried to be admitted into the Hindu College; but his age proving a bar to his admission, he joined the old St. Xavier's College, where he was taught Latin, Greek and French, in addition to English, besides taking lessons in Italian privately. Having intermediately passed the prescribed examination in the Fort William College, he used to give lessons in Persian, Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali, to young Civil Servants on their arrival in this country. After living for about two years with his friend, Babu Ram Tonu Lahiry, Shama Churn found he was able to support himself, and he accordingly engaged separate lodgings at Thunthunni, whence he went daily to the Madrassa at 6 A. M., and at 10 A. M., to the St. Xavier's College, where he remained till 4 P. M. From this hour till 8 or 9 P.M. he attended to his pupils. To fulfil these engagements he underwent the most severe privations. It was impossible to get a fresh cooked meal at the early hour he left home. For seven long years, Sundays excepted, Shama Churn ate one regular meal at night, made a repast of Native hand-

bread, cooked over-night, with a little butter, at dawn, and then went out for the day with his pockets full of dry gram which he munched for his tiffin. At times, in the absence of a cook, he was forced to content himself with a meal consisting of a preparation of only milk and flour. His love of knowledge was so intense and absorbing that he practised a self-denial, which would have done credit to an anchorite. In order that no part of the day might pass unprofitably, he even set apart the time occupied in walking to and from his work to the mastery of the grammars of the different languages he was studying; and during his whole career at College he allowed himself only two or three hours at night for sleep. The Sunday of every week was longingly looked forward to by him as an opportunity for taking the rest, so much needed to preserve his health; and hence, he long called Sunday "the happy day." To be near his work, he subsequently removed to Toltolah, where, in time, he built his comfortable house. In 1842, he was appointed Second English Teacher in the Government Sanskrit College on a salary of Rs. 70 per mensem. Here, with the assistance of the several learned Pundits attached to the Institution, he continued to prosecute his studies in Sanskrit of which he had already acquired some knowledge."

With Pundit Ishur Chunder Bydyasagur he read *Dya Krama Shungraha* written by Sreekristo Turkolunkar. After the school hours he began to read Sanskrit literature and Grammar with Grish Bidyarutna, Gunga Dhur Turkobagish, and Prem Chand Turkobagish all Professors of the said College. The well-known Sanskrit *savant* Pundit Joy Narain Turkolunkar taught him some parts of Seven Upanishads, Samanjasha Britti, and Sankaracharjie's Saririk Bhashya.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## HIS CAREER IN THE HIGH COURT.

"In 1848, Shama Churn was recommended by the Hon'ble C. H. Cameron, President of the Council of Education, to the notice of Mr. Charles Tucker, Chief Judge of the late Sudder Court. Being impressed favourably with Shama Churn's abilities and acquirements, Mr. Tucker advised him to act as his Peshkar for two years, in order that he might become fully acquainted with the working of the Court, and promised to give him, at the expiry of that time, the *sunud* of a Pleader, for which Shama Churn had asked on his first introduction. Shama Churn accepted Mr. Tucker's advice, and went on working as a Peshkar, reading *mists* and drawing *rubukaries*, &c., in Urdu and Bengali. Before the expiry of the two years, ill-health compelled Mr. Tucker to go to the Cape, and he was succeeded in the Court by Mr. John Dunbar, who, finding some difficulty in disposing of his work, asked Shama Churn for his assistance as much as possible. In these circumstances, Shama Churn began making translations of the records of cases for disposal; and these translations were found so great a convenience and advantage in the transactions of business, that the practice became almost general in the Court. With the sanction of Lord Dalhousie, the then Governor-General, Mr. John Russel Colvin, the Chief Judge of the Sudder Court, appointed in 1850 Shama Churn Translator to the Court on a salary of Rs. 400 per mensem. The practise of translating the records of suits was subsequently introduced for the first time, and the post of translator was created in every district Judge's Court in Bengal. To Shama Churn is, therefore, due the credit for this important improvement in the working of the Sudder and Zillah Courts. The reform has been allowed the fullest and freest scope under the present High Court. In June, 1857, he

was promoted from the Translatorship to the post of Chief Interpreter of the late Supreme Court.

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#### SHYAMA CHURN AS THE CHIEF INTERPRETER OF THE HIGH COURT.

In June, 1857, he was promoted from the Translatorship to the post of Chief Interpreter of the late Supreme Court in the place of Mr. Aviot who died at the time ; but some objections having been raised to the appointment, Shyama Churn, at the request of Sir James Colville, the Chief Justice, produced certificates of character from the Judges of the late Sudder Court and from the late Sir Rajah Radha Kant Dev Bahadur, Babus Prosunno Cumar Tagore, Ram Gopal Ghose, and Ramaprasaud Roy, whereupon those objections were set aside. The implicit confidence of the Judges which Shyama Churn enjoyed as Chief Interpreter of the late Supreme Court, fully justified his original selection for the appointment. This was the first time, we believe, when the post of the Chief Interpreter was conferred upon a native. When the post fell vacant, he made enquiries from the late Babu Prasuna Kumar Tagore whether it would be thrown open to the Natives or not. Being assured in the affirmative, he prepared himself for it and stood first among the twelve competitors chiefly composed of Europeans. Thus, the credit of taking away one of the lucrative appointments from the hold of Europeans, belongs to Shyama Churn. It is said that Babu Prosuna Kumar recommended him several times, to Sir James Colville, the then Chief Justice in general terms of praise. The Judges of the Supreme Court were so much pleased with the efficient and satisfactory discharge of the duties of the new post, that they allowed him to charge a commission fee of two gold mohurs per day, when he would be required to go out of Court to take evidence in a case.

An amusing anecdote is related of him, in connexion with the efficiency he displayed in this post. On the first day (in July) when he took his appointment, a Jew appeared in a case, but his language the other interpreters and the lawyers could not understand. Shyama Churn was then sent for by the Chief Justice, and a free conversation took place between the Jew and Shyama Churn in Persian, and the difficulty of the Court was thus got over.

One more anecdote in this connexion which is as interesting as the above. One day, when he was interpreting in Arabic what a party in a suit had to say, the Counsel for the defence represented to the Court that Babu Shyama Churn had misinterpreted the meaning of a certain Arabic word. The learned Counsel moreover mentioned the name of a Moulvi who interpreted it otherwise. Thereupon Shyama Churn with characteristic boldness said that Moulvi was the pupil of his own pupil and indignantly refused to hear the version of the learned Counsel. For the decision of the mooted point, the case was adjourned, that day, and on the next day, the learned Counsel apologized to Shyama Churn for what he had said.

Such was the boldness and independence of Babu Shyama Churn, as the Chief Interpreter of the Highest Court in the land. The Chief Justice used to say often times that "Shyama Prosad and Roma Prosad were the real *Maliks* (owners) of the supreme Court." That Babu Shyama Churn was highly respected both by the Bench and the Bar—nay, indeed, by all classes of people, for his learning, ability, honesty and integrity, is a fact which does not admit of any doubt. After a distinguished career in the High Court,—a career which sheds lustre not only on his own sacred memory, but also on the nation to which he belonged, he retired on a pension of Rs. 300 per mensem in the beginning of January, 1873.

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## CHAPTER V.

BABU SHYAMA CHURN AS A TAGORE  
LAW-PROFESSOR.

The Tagore Law-Professorship, with an annual honorarium of Rs 10,000, is, according to the terms of the bequest of the late Babu Prusuna Kumar Tagore, who made an endowment of 3 lacs of rupees for the creation of this Professional Chair in the Calcutta Presidency College is thrown open to public competition. In those days, this and similar other high appointments in the Education Department had to be filled up by scholars indented from Europe, as no qualified native could be found, competent enough to hold them. To Babu Shyama Churn Sirkar is due, therefore the sole credit of snatching away such a prize appointment from the field of European competition. Since the creation of this Chair, European Jurists and Barristers-at-law had hitherto held the appointment ; and when Shyama Churn stood as a candidate, in 1872, Mr. Cowell, Mr. Piffard, and Mr. Goodeve, Barristers-at-Law contested his claims. The question of eligibility to the post was not, as is now too often the case, between a Native and Native but between Europeans and Natives. Europeans had a prestige of their own while the Native had none. Under these circumstances, Shyama Churn the Native Jurist ventured to oust the Europeans from the Chair for the first time in the history of the Calcutta University. He was first selected for the post by the Faculty of Law, and the Senate afterwards ratified the selection. It is said by his son Babu Dena Nath Sirkar that on the day when the Senate of the Calcutta University met together in 1872, at the Town Hall, Babu Shyama Churn sent him to bring an early news of the result of that day's meeting. Sir Charles Hobhouse, the then Law Member of the Supreme

Legislative Council, and Mr. Montriou of the Calcutta Bar fought tooth and nail for the bestowal of this appointment upon Shyama Churn. He held this appointment in 1873, and as the result of his learned disquisition on Mahomedan Law of Inheritance for the *Sunni* and *'Shia* sects respectively, he published two big volumes of his learned lectures on that subject.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### HIS LITERARY WORKS.

In those days of the pre-University period, when education was in its infancy, and when there was no stimulus or demand for books prepared by native scholars, it was not to be expected of Babu Shyama Churn that he should devote his time solely to writing books. He had to work his way up after a great struggle, and not being master of his own time, he had not the learned leisure for too many literary works. While he was a tutor or a (Munshi) in the Fort William College, he wrote in 1840 we believe, at the request of Mr. E. T. Marshall, the then Secretary to the said College, an Anglo-Bengali Grammar entitled "Introduction to the Bengali Language" for the use of the civilian students of Bengal who sadly stood in need of such a book. To quote the words of the author in his first preface to the book "the work contains a Grammar not only of the Bengali but of those words of the Sanskrit and other languages already in use, and capable of being used in Bengali, with copious notes explanatory of idiomatic niceties, and the proper application of words." For this work, he got a reward of Rs. 1000 from the Government. It was at this time that the venerable Pundit Ishur Chunder Vidyasagar published his "*Betal Pun̄cha Bingshatī*" for the use of these civilians studying in the Fort William College, Calcutta. His next work "Gram-

mar in Bengali" was published in 1267 corresponding with 1861 A. D. This work he undertook at the request of the Honb'le Drinkwater Bethune, one of the greatest well-wishers of Native education in India. These were his minor works and are now out of print. But the best cristalized product of his master mind and which could well stand comparision with a European work of the same nature was his *Byabastha Durpana*. It was at the suggestion of Sir James Colville in 1850, he undertook to write these two Volumes of books which will serve as an everlasting monument of his patience, perseverance, industry and legal learning. The first part of the *Byabastha Durpana*, containing 680 pages of royal octavo size was given out to the world in 1859. In his preface to the first edition of this volume, he acknowledges that he derived great help from the late Babu Prasunna Kumar Tagore, Mr. W. Montriou Barrister-at-Law, and Pundit Bharat Chunder Siromony, the then Professor of Hindoo Law in the Sanscrit College. The second volume of the Digest of Hindoo Law dealing with marriage, *Streedhone*, adoption, exclusion from inheritance and caste system, containing 983 pages was published in a subsequent year. This truly *Magnum opus*, this repertory of Hindoo Law which has been bequeathed to his countrymen, does not stand in need of praise at our hands. Learned jurists both of this country and of Europe have praised it in terms of the highest praise.

His next great work is his *Vyabastha Chundrika* containing 660 pages was published in the year 1887. It is a Digest of the Hindoo *MittaKshyara* law as current in the Schools of Mithila, Benares, Maharashtra, and Dravira. The first volume of this work in English, Sanskrit and Urdu was published in 1878 and the second part in a subsequent year. For the publication of this great work, the late Moharajah Komul Krishna Deb Bahadur of Sova Bazar, Calcutta, helped him



“materially” with money, Pundit Hurish Chunder Kabirutna, additional Professor of Sanscrit in the Presidency helped him in correcting his proof sheets. Besides these works, he wrote other works of minor importance.

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#### HIS CHARACTER.

Shyama Churn was a man of great scholarship, a sound lawyer, well read in Hindu shastras and a linguist of no mean repute. He knew nine different languages, viz, Bengali, English, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Hindi, Greek, and Latin, and the knowledge acquired by him in these classics and dialects, he was not indebted for, to any school-master or to a school or academy of any kind. He was his own school-master, his strong will-power was his best teacher, and the dire poverty of his life was his best training ground. He began to study English at the advanced age of 21 when our academicians of modern days come out full-fledged out of the University, and yet what are their attainments compared to those of this self-cultured Brahmin as reflected in the pages of his memorable works on Hindu Shastras. Early deprived of the protection of a kind Hindu father, he roamed about in the streets of Krishnagur with *Gulistan* in his arm-pit, and had to assuage pangs of hunger and fatigue with soaked gram, half a sheer in quantity, admixed sometimes with a little salt or ginger of common quality. During his first appearance in the Metropolis itself, far prior to the time of Lord Bentinck, he used to do the business of a “drawer of water” as we have already described, but amidst this crushing poverty and tiresome business he used to go to the late Babu Peary Chand Miter and Ramgopal Ghose to learn English from them. For full seven years, while he was a Munshi in the Calcutta Madrassa, his eldest boy Babu Deno

Nath assures us distinctly, he had no regular meal a day and slept at night for a short time of three hours only. With the dawn of day, Shyama Churn rose from his bed, took his morning ablution, and a few *chapaties* prepared the night before, and having done his duties in the Calcutta Madrassa, he walked to Dum Dum to teach some European Military gentlemen residing there and had to come back to town to attend to his duties at the Fort William College. With the setting sun, his Herculean task for the day came to a close, and poor Shyama Churn had to come back to his lodging, to prepare his own food with his hand, then to partake of it and after taking a little rest, read his books and went to bed at midnight. In this wise he struggled on with poverty till at last he conquered it.

Nurtured in the lap of cold adversity, he knew what a misfortune it was to be poor, and his sympathy for the helpless and the distressed was as strong as ever. When after a hard struggle in life, fortune smiled on him, he spent money like water to benefit the poor. In his own native village as well as in his residence at Taltolah in Calcutta he was pretty often seen taking a rapturous delight in feeding the poor and giving pecuniary assistance to the helpless widows, orphans, and students. To the learned Sanskrit *pundits* and *Moulovis* of Bengal, from whom he received a gratuitous education in classics, his respect and bounty were unstinted. Year after year he spent large sums of money in helping them without making any fuss about it. He was courteous and affable to all and his amiability, his urbanity and suavity of character won the respect of all classes of people. And he was a gentleman in the highest sense of the term. Possessed of a strong physique and robust frame of body and mind, he was a voracious eater, more than half a seer of rice with a proportionate quantity of vegetables, *dal*, and milk being necessary for his mid-day dinner. We had the honor of serving under him as the head-master of his English

School which he maintained for more than 15 years in his own village of Mamjoani at a monthly cost of Rs. 100 per mensem to give gratuitous education to the boys of the neighbouring poor; and we saw him work at his desk for full twelve hours from morning till twilight. He never slept during the day and used to bathe twice daily. He died in the month of September 1882 at the advanced age of 67, leaving his only son and a widow and a large circle of friends to mourn his loss. And he was in the full enjoyment of vigour till disease put an end to his valuable life. Reading and writing became his second nature, and we never found him to pass his time in idle enjoyment. Innocent recreations he no doubt enjoyed, but he hated all frivolities and vain pleasures. His pursuit in life was highly intellectual, and the cultivation of his mental powers kept pace with the development of his moral faculties. He was of a dark complexion, stalwart and strongly built, with round face, brilliant eyes and large forehead.

He was abstemious in his habit and never adopted English dress and mode of living. He was a Hindu among the Hindus, a very *beau ideal* of a Hindu gentleman. Comte de Buffon used to say that "Genius is patience", and if there is any truth in his saying, the remarkable career of Babu Shyama Churn, his patient industry, his indomitable perseverance crowned with such remarkable success afford a striking illustration of the soundness of the wise saying of the immortal Buffon. We hope our Indian students should follow the noble example of this immortal son of Bengal.

The following letter kindly placed at our disposal by Babu Nil Comul Basak, a relative of the late Babu Gobind Chunder Basak will throw further light on the character of Babu Shyama Churn.

*Calcutta 25th May, 1842.*

My dear Gobind,

This is favoured by a particular friend of mine, Babu Shyama Churn Sirkar who has proceeded to Midnapore as Bengalee Instruc-

tor to Mr. Bayley. As he has no friend or acquaintance there, I have been requested to give him an introductory note to you, and I do so with great pleasure. I can say without breach of truth that he is not an ordinary person in the country. He has a knowledge of Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Hindustanee and of course of English and Bengalee, and I have reason to think that his acquaintance with these languages is not merely superficial. You may have read in the *Englishman* sometime ago, remarks highly commendatory of his Latin composition, in the notice that that journal took of the Examination of St. Xavier's College. His Latin Essay was the best of those produced. He had no friends or parent's care to superintend over his education. When he came to town he brought with him some knowledge of Persian and knew almost no body. He has since acquired all that I have above stated and the admiration and regard of not a few among those whose good opinion it is worth having. His perseverance and thirst after knowledge are truly wonderful, and such as is very rare among the new class. &c. &c. &c.

Yours affectionately,

RAM TONOO LAHIRY.

To

Babu Gobind Chunder Basak,

*Deputy-Collector,*

MIDNAPORE.

## LIFE OF BABU SURENDRA NATH BANERJEE

### CHAPTER I.

#### HIS BIRTH, PARENTAGE AND EDUCATION.

Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee, the orator, the life and soul of all political agitation in Bengal, and one of the few active workers in the field of education, comes from a very respectable family of Rarhee Brahmins. His great grand-father, Babu Gour Kishore Banerjee, came from the Faridpur District and settled at Monirampur, a few miles from the Railway Station at Barrackpur, where the illustrious subject of this sketch now resides. His grand-father Babu Goluck Chunder held an appointment in the Salt Department under the Bengal Board of Revenue, and it was in this capa-

city that he came to reside in Calcutta. He was a man of great liberality of heart and of strict orthodox principles, and delighted in feeding the poor and giving help to his poor friends and relations. His illustrious son, Babu Durga Churn, the father of Babu Surendra Nath, was born at Monirampur in 1819, and was educated in the Hindoo College where he highly distinguished himself. He died in February 1870, when Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee was still in England, when the late Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal in his obituary notice, wrote as follows :

“ He was the ablest Native Allopathic practitioner, but he was something better—he was, as an English Assistant Surgeon, himself one of the largest practitioners in Calcutta styled him—“ Nature's Doctor.” Possessed of rare intellectual gifts, he gave early proofs of his future excellence. While a pupil of the Hindoo College, a fellow-collegian tells us, he shewed his pre-eminent superiority by the wonderful facility with which he carried away the highest prizes. He would not care to attend to his College studies for the whole year round, spending his time at home by private studies, but would appear at the time of the annual examination, and beat his fellow-students, who had plodded for the last twelve months. He was a voracious reader, and was strong particularly in history and philosophy. He was employed for sometime as a teacher in David Hare's School, and then became a clerk in the Fort William College. A sad case of cholera at home led him to study the mysteries of the science of medicine, but he had not the patience to complete the usual course of five years at the Medical College. He left it without taking a diploma, and his success as a medical practitioner was as remarkable as it was rapid. He made his professional reputation by saving the life of Babu Nilkumul Bannerjee, now\* the Banian of Messrs.

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\* Since dead

Jardine Skinner & Co., who had been attacked with cholera of the deadliest type and given up by the best physicians of the city, both Native and European.. He was equally strong in the diagnosis and prognosis of diseases. A curious feature in his professional practice was that he never sought patients but was sought for. The faith which he inspired in his medical skill among all classes of natives, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, was so unbounded that his very presence was considered half cure. Indeed the poor, who could not afford to call in European physicians, felt that if they could secure Durga Churn's presence, they secured all that human knowledge and skill could effect." (Vide Hindoo Patriot, 21st February, 1870.)

Babu Surendra Nath, who has inherited the father's qualities of energy and devotion to work, was born at Calcutta in November 1848. Babu Durga Churn had five sons, of whom Babu Surendra Nath is the second. In his early youth, he was sent to a *patshalla* at Patuldanga where he acquired a rudimentary knowledge of Bengali and arithmetic; and at the age of seven, he took his admission into the Doveton College where he studied with diligence. The Doveton Institution consisted then, as it does now for the most part, of European and Eurasian boys, and when he joined this School he had just learnt the English alphabet. Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee never had a private tutor except such help as he could occasionally derive from a friend who used to live with the family, and he tells us that he learnt the language more through the ear than with the aid of the Grammar and the Dictionary. When he went up for the Entrance Examination, he had only learnt Lennie's Grammar, and his knowledge of Highley, the standard Grammar of these days, did not extend beyond the positive degree. In 1863 he matriculated in the Calcutta University in the first division, having taken

up Latin as his second language, and obtained a Junior Scholarship. In the Little-go Examination, two years latter, he was similarly successful and obtained Senior Scholarship. He passed his B.A. degree in 1868 in the second division. Why such an intelligent youth who had invariably secured high places in the different University Examination passed the B.A. Examination in the second division may be explained by the fact that Babu Surendra Nath was in bad health, having had two serious attacks of fever before the Examination which seriously interfered with his studies. All along Latin had been his second language.

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## CHAPTER II.

### HIS DEPARTURE FOR ENGLAND TO COMPETE FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE.

Mr. J. Sime, now an Inspector of Schools in the Panjab, was the Principal of the Doveton College when Mr. Banerjee took his degree; and it is said that it was this gentleman who suggested to him that he should go to England and compete for the Civil Service. Mr. Sime used to take a great interest in the education of this precocious youth, in whom he early discerned all the elements of his future glorious career. Agreeably to the advice of this European Professor, though against the strongest remonstrances of his mother and his aged grand-father, Mr. Banerjee left for England on the 3rd March 1868 with a view to compete for the Civil Service. With that view, he studied in University College, London. His unrivalled command of the English language may be attributable to the fact, that, while in University College, he studied English under Professor Henry Morley, one of the best English Scholars in London. He also learnt Sanskrit under Professor Goldstucker. In 1869,

more than three hundred candidates appeared at the Civil Service Examination, and four Indian youths, viz., Messrs. Romesh Chunder Dutt, Behary Lal Gupta, Surendra Nath Banerjee, and Sreepad Babaji Thakur passed the test successfully. Babu Surendranath secured the 38th place in the list, in order of merit, while the other three obtained the 3rd, 14th and the 39th places, respectively.

But the success of Mr Banerjee soon afterwards proved a thorn on his side as the Civil Service Commissioners raised an objection to his admission on the ground of his having exceeded the prescribed limit of age viz., twenty years, at the time of passing the Civil Service Examination. They urged that if he was sixteen years at the time of the Entrance Examination in 1863, he would be more than 20 years at the time of passing the Civil Service in 1869. The Civil Service Commissioners accordingly removed his name from the list without making any adequate enquiry into the matter. Mr. Banerjee, thereupon, moved the Queen's Bench for a writ of *mandamus* which was readily granted by the Judges, among whom was the late Chief Justice Cockburn. The Judges expressed their strongest surprize at the conduct of the Commissioners, upon whom a rule was issued to show cause why they should not make a fresh enquiry into the matter. The Civil Service Commissioners did not contest the matter. They thought discretion was the better part of valour, and after the strong expression of opinion from the Judges of the highest Court in England, the Commissioners without much further ado re-admitted him into the Civil Service. Mr. Sreepad Babaji Thakur, whose name had also been removed upon the same ground, was re-admitted into the Service at the same time.

The difficulty arose purely from a misapprehension as to the Hindoo method of calculating age. We calculate the age in anticipation of the approaching



birth-day. We take the child to be as many years old as that which he will attain at his next birth-day. If he has for example completed his second birth-day and is in his third year, we say he is three years old. The European method is different. The child is considered to be as many years old as many birth-days he has completed. Thus taking up the case which we have already cited, the child who is three years old according to our system would be considered as being only two years according to the European method of computation. Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea was thus according to our method of calculation 16 years of age at the time of his appearing at the Entrance Examination, although really he was only fifteen according to the European way of counting the age. His age entered in the school rolls at the time of his admission when he was a boy of only seven years old shewed that he was fifteen when he appeared at the Entrance Examination, and was therefore quite within the limit of age (*viz* 20) when he appeared at the Open Competitive Examination. The Civil Service Commissioners did not sufficiently apprehend the Hindoo method of counting the age, which however was conclusively proved by over-whelming testimony proceeding from such men as the late Moharaja Rama Nath Tagore, the late Babu Kristo Das Pal, the venerable Pundit Iswara Chunder Vidyasagar, Moharaja Sir Jotindra Mohun Tagore and others. Equally satisfactory was the evidence with regard to Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea's age and the matter ended satisfactorily. It was after a year's hard contest, in February 1870, that Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea's name was restored to the list of selected candidates, and he was called upon to prepare himself for the Final Examination of 1871. He had lost a year and he was required to do two years' work in one year's time. But nothing daunted, he responded to the call and his great power of work was of signal use to him on this occasion. Babu Surendra Nath's father did not live to hear of the good news of

his son's success. He was on his death-bed while the telegraphic news was on its way. He died on Sunday the 20th February; the bereaved family heard the news of his re-admission on the morning of the following day. Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea came out to this country as a Member of the Bengal Civil Service in September 1871.

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#### SURENDRA NATH AS A CIVIL SERVANT AND HIS DIFFICULTIES.

He came back to his mother country and was posted as an Assistant Magistrate at Sylhet, one of the districts now under the jurisdiction of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, but then under the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Sir George Campbell was then on the Bengal *Musnad*, and Lord Northbrook was then the Viceroy and Governor-General of India. Scarcely two years elapsed since he had joined when unfortunately for the Government, and fortunately for the country, certain charges were brought against him.

The sum and substance of these charges was that in a particular case he had directed the transfer of a case to the *Ferari* Register and had improperly (the official word was "dishonestly," though we fail to see wherein the dishonesty lies at least as far as this aspect of the case was concerned) issued a warrant, and when called upon to explain it made false statement with regard to it. This was the sum and substance of the allegations made against Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea, but it was spun out into fourteen charges, and the matter assumed the proportions of a state trial. Mr. O'Kenealy who had prosecuted the Wahabi Amirudin was Surendra Nath's prosecutor, and Mr. Prinsep (then Judge of Hugli) who was the judge in that case was also Surendra Nath's Judge. "Is Surendra Nath a Wahabi" exclaimed Kristo Dass Pal in the columns of

the *Hindoo Patriot*. Be that as it may, a Commission of enquiry was appointed to try Surendra Nath consisting of Mr. Prinsep as President, and Mr. Reynolds, then Magistrate of Mymensing, and Major Holroyd, then Deputy Commissioner in Assam, as members. The Commissioners met at Sylhet in November 1873.

Babu Surendra Nath had asked that the trial should be held in Calcutta in the full blaze of public opinion, and where proper legal assistance would be available. The application was refused, but the Government expressed its willingness to consider favourably any proposal he might make for giving him legal help. He suggested the name of several gentlemen whose services might be lent to him, but no help was given him by the Government in this respect. The trial lasted for several days and the Commissioners submitted their report, finding Babu Surendra Nath guilty of the charges brought against him. The Government of Bengal and the Government of India substantially accepted the view of the matter, and Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee was dismissed from the Service of Government in March 1874 with an allowance of 50 Rupees a month. We have no desire to rake up a controversy which is past and well nigh forgotten, and which probably would have been wholly forgotten, but for the position which Surendra Nath has won for himself in life and in the annals of his country by his subsequent work. Judging by that work, the charges appear highly improbable. A man's character does not change as if by miracle. Does it stand to reason that he who has been found guilty by the Government of falsehood should exhibit the devotion, the energy, the earnestness, and the manly and firm self-reliance which have been the leading characteristics of Surendra Nath throughout the whole of his public life? The whole of Surendra Nath's public life has conclusively shewn that he is an essentially sincere and earnest nature. Is it likely that he was guilty of the

charge which Mr. Prinsep and his Colleagues found against him? Nor is this all. The whole case may be said to lie in a nutshell. Babu Surendra Nath passed the order in the case complained of, with a view to avoid the necessity of giving an explanation in regard to the case which had been pending for a long time. That is the alleged motive for the transfer of the case to the *Ferari* list. His explanation was that he knew nothing about the order, and that he signed it along with other orders. That his explanation must be accepted as correct is clear from what followed. Called upon within a short time of this order to furnish an explanation as to why another case was pending, and not having the papers before him he furnished an explanation with regard to this case. Now if he had passed the *ferari* order with the full knowledge of its effect, and with the deliberate intention of avoiding explanation, how came he to give an explanation about this very case, in regard to which by reason of the *ferari* order no explanation was needed? The mistake in our judgment is conclusive evidence of his innocence. The most eminent Hindoo gentlemen of the time took precisely this view of the matter, and among others Raja Degumber Mitter who wrote a statement which is printed among a batch of papers which were circulated at the time in connection with the case. Be that as it may, and considering this matter at this distance of time when we are free from the excitement of the case, it will be admitted even by moderate members of the Civil Service that the order for his dismissal was exceedingly cruel and hard. Looking at the matter from the broad point of public interests, we rejoice that Surendra Nath was dismissed. The public interests have thereby been greatly benefitted. If Surendra Nath had been in the Civil Service, he would probably have been a distinguished Judge or a distinguished Magistrate; but he would not have been the eminent journalist, the great orator, the devoted political reformer, the fore-

most in fighting the battles of his country. He has won for himself a name and a place in history which he would not have won in the Government Service.

Before the order of dismissal was passed Surendra Nath again left for England in March 1874 with a view to represent his case to the authorities in England. He arrived in England in April 1874; the order for dismissal had been passed on the 31st March. He was thus too late to represent his interests. He now completed his terms in the Middle Temple; but the Benchers refused to call him to the Bar in view of the order passed by the Government of India. He fought hard to obtain a reconsideration of his case by the Benchers in which he was greatly assisted by the venerable Mr. John Cochrane of the Calcutta Bar who in old age still retained his warm interest for India. But all in vain. Babu Surendranath returned to India in June 1875 to commence life again with prospects as gloomy as ever any man had been called upon to face. He was now a ruined man, and the subsequent chapters will show how his rare energy, devotion and self-reliance enabled him to overcome all obstacles and to create a new career for himself in which he is doing such useful work.

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#### HIS PUBLIC CAREER AS A SCHOOL-MASTER AND FOUNDER OF THE RIPON COLLEGE.

His dismissal from the public service proved an immense gain to his own countrymen as we shall presently describe. His failure instead of throwing a damper upon his ardent and enthusiastic spirit brought forth into active play all his inherent great qualities of mind, and he took to the noble profession of a school-master as Professor of English literature in the Metropolitan Institution now ably conducted by the Venerable Pundit Ishur Chunder Vidyasagar. In January

1876, the Venerable veteran educationist who is always ready to lend his helping hand to struggling merit, offered him an appointment as a Professor in the newly affiliated college classes attached to the Metropolitan Institution on a salary of Rs. 200 a month. The appointment in question was bestowed on him by the learned Pundit partly from the consideration of friendship which existed between him and Babu Surendra Nath's father, and partly from a desire to help a young man, so hopelessly ruined. Babu Surendra Nath had ample leisure while thus engaged, so that when the City School was established he joined that Institution with the full concurrence of Pundit Vidyasagar. In 1881 he left the Metropolitan Institution and joined the Free Church College. In this way he worked on still retaining however his appointment in the City College, to the great satisfaction of the boys and his employers till the year 1882 when he thought of establishing a school of his own. And the time proved most opportune to him. The entire school-going population was so much enamoured by his eloquence as an orator, by his sympathy with them and above all by his marvellous success as a teacher in the several Colleges of Calcutta that they began to worship him as a demi-god, and felt an unbounded admiration for him. Previous to his time, no other Native teacher exhibited such marvellous qualities of sustained effort, great energy, fluency in writing and speaking as he did, and his popularity increased among the boys and their guardians, day by day, as he appeared in all his strength and power before the public both on the public platform and the professorial chair. Taking advantage of this golden opportunity, Babu Surendra Nath took charge of an insignificant school in Bow Bazar, from January 1882 with little more than 100 boys on its roll.

By dint of perseverance, never-failing assiduity, great power of organization and by the utmost exercise of economy and care, the little Institution of Bow Bazar

has been turned into a first-class College known as the "Ripon College," now teaching over 1700 boys in the College and School department. The success, this private College has achieved within the short space of seven years has been not only acknowledged by the highest officials in the land but reflects great credit on Babu Surendra Nath, its founder and Proprietor, and also on those who are connected with it.

His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor in distributing the Prizes of the Ripon College on the 31st March 1888 thus referred to Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee's efforts in this direction :—

"Meanwhile wherever a fresh experiment like that of the Ripon College was successfully started, it deserved the warmest encouragement on the part of the authorities, as it exemplified the wisdom of the policy of Government that the further development of higher education could now be safely left to the people themselves. Turning to the annual report he was glad to see such a capital account of the progress of the institution. It had taken a large leap in numbers both in the College and School Department which was very instructive, and the success which it had met in all the examinations of the College and School, together with its branches, tended to show that the institution was doing a highly useful work. He admired and congratulated the proprietor for his energy and perseverance in the amount of work he was doing for the institution. The supervision of the Ripon Institution alone must be a heavy burthen but to that he has added the guidance of two branch schools at Kidderpore and Howrah, and this in addition to his numerous public duties and his labours as a journalist is a remarkable proof of energy and industry." (Vide Babu Raj Jogeshur Mitter's collection of speeches of Sir Steuart Bayley p.119.)

In this connection it is necessary to mention that in 1886 Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee established a Branch of the Ripon Collegiate School at Khidderpur,

and in the following year he established another Branch School at Howrah. Both the Branches are doing well especially the one at Howrah. Babu Surendra Nath inspects these Branches every week, and takes part in the work of teaching. The number of pupils in the Main Institution and the Branches come up to nearly 2500—a number that might form a small University by itself.

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BABU SURENDRA NATH AS A JOURNALIST.—ORIGIN OF THE *BENGALÉE* NEWSPAPER.

It was in the year 1861, as we have already said in a previous chapter in the life of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee Barrister-at-Law, the *Bengalée* newspaper was first ushered into existence under the fostering care and management of Mr. Bonnerjee and Babu Bacharam Chatterjee. The late Babu Grish Chunder Ghose, a valiant knight of the pen in those days and a colleague of Hurish Chunder Mukherjee, conducted the journal for a period of nearly eight years after which Babu Bacharam Chatterjee, the late Deputy-Magistrate Babu Tara Prosad Chatterjee, the late Babu Rajkristo Mukherjee M.A., B.L., and a host of other writers wrote for the paper and kept it afloat for a time. But it was in the year 1878, Babu Surendranath cast a longing look on the field of journalism, and he was the right man for it. Never before his time, a man having the advantage of an English training in Britain itself had taken to Indian journalism and with such a marked success as fell to the lot of Babu Surendra Nath. The praiseworthy ambition of serving his mother-country in this capacity became predominant in his mind as he rose in popular estimation by his unique powers of oratory; and a splendid opportunity presented itself in his way. He heard that Babu Bacharam was willing to make over his Journal to any competent person



if any such could be found. Surendra Nath accordingly expressed his desire to take charge of the paper and to buy the proprietary right of it. The bargain was struck and with little more than a hundred subscribers he began to conduct the Journal with his usual ability. Within the short space of two years, the paper regained its former prestige, and the *Bengalee* has now a circulation of nearly 1400. Amidst the arduous and multifarious duties as an educationist, political leader, Municipal Commissioner, Honorary Magistrate, he edits his paper with great ability, tact, moderation and judgment. Friday in the week is his busiest day, when he works almost the whole day and night to get his paper ready on every Saturday morning. We had the honor of serving under Babu Surendra Nath in connexion with the management of this paper for a considerable time, and can bear testimony to the fact that on several occasions he would deliver a most eloquent speech in the Town Hall at a public meeting, rove about the town in connexion with it, and at 6 o'clock in the evening would write clever articles for the *Bengalee* and at one stretch would finish the proof-reading of the entire paper till 3 o'clock in the morning.

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#### HIS POLITICAL CAREER.

We have already opened the first chapter of his life by describing him to be "the life and soul" of all political agitation in the country. That is a stubborn fact which, even his enemies can not deny. Education commenced in this land in the halcyon days of the immortal David Hare and the pupils of this watch-maker, notably among them, the immortal Ramgopal Ghose, and the Rev. K. M. Banerjea were the first pioneers in the field of political agitation. Then came Hurish Chunder Mukherjee and Kristo Das Pal and a host of other men

too numerous to be mentioned here. But these great men, however splendid and valuable their services might have been to the cause of the healthy development of popular aspirations in politics, laid only the foundation on which the colossal superstructure of national and political unity has been sought to be raised by the subject of this notice; and the credit is all his own. Ram Gopal and Kristo Mohun, Hurish and Kristo Das worked from within; but Surendra Nath raised the building from without. The sphere of work of the former was confined to a limited few, but the latter's work of usefulness embraced in its wide and broad sphere the entire length and breadth of India. Ram Gopal, Hurish, and Kristo Das never went beyond the few metropolitan centres of intelligence and education to preach the gospel of politics, but Surendra Nath with his banner aloft went from town to town, from village to village, amidst unbearable heat and drenching rain, unmindful of personal comfort and convenience, to rouse Bengal, nay all India, from the slumber of ages past. From Madras in the South to Multan and Rawal-Pindee in the North-west; from Dacca in the East to Puna, Ahmedabad and Surat in the Western Presidency, there is hardly a town of any note where Surendra Nath has not been, like the Apostles and Monks of the middle ages, to preach the lessons of political unity and of national effort for political enfranchisement.

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## CHAPTER III.

## THE GREAT CONTEMPT CASE IN 1883.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage;  
Minds innocent and quiet take  
That for a hermitage."

Lovelace.

Carlyle said that the greatest man is he who can bear the heaviest weight of misfortune without staggering. And it was the lot of Babu Surendra Nath to be placed in a serious dilemma in his journalistic career, and what was ostensibly meant to cover him with shame and ignominy proved a blessing to him and shed a lustre around his life. He passed through the fiery ordeal triumphing over his difficulties and earned a world-wide renown undreamt by those who meant otherwise. It was on the memorable 28th April 1883, Babu Surendra Nath wrote an editorial note in his *Bengalee* newspaper, on the authority of the now defunct hebdomadal the *Brahma Public Opinion*, criticizing the conduct of the Hon'ble Justice John Freemantle Norris, a puisne Judge of the Calcutta High Court in connexion with a case in which a Hindu idol (*Saligram*) was brought into Court. The *Brahma Public Opinion* being then conducted by a Native Attorney of the High Court, Babu Surendra Nath naturally believed, as was afterwards stated in his affidavit, that the statement contained in that journal was true; and as no contradiction appeared in any of the newspapers in regard to its authenticity, he as a Journalist naturally felt indignant, and in the interest of public good and with the purest of motives wrote as follows:—

"We have now, however, amongst us a Judge, who, if he does not actually recall to mind the days of Jeffreys and Scroggs,

has certainly done enough, within the short time that he has filled the High Court Bench, to shew how unworthy he is &c."

Scarcely four days had elapsed since the appearance of this para in the *Bengalee*, when on the 2nd of May, the Hon'ble Justice Norris took his seat on the Bench after lunch, and after repudiating the charge that he had ordered the idol to be brought into the Court without the consent of the parties concerned, and against the feeling of the entire Hindu community, issued a rule on Babu Surendranath and his Printer Babu Ramkumar Dey to shew cause why they should not be punished for contempt of Court. Only two days' time was allowed them to prepare to answer the charge; and on the 4th of May, Mr. W. C. Bonnerjea Barrister-at-Law instructed by Babu Gonesh Chunder Chunder, one of the best native attorneys of the High Court, and with whom it is a pleasure to help his countrymen in their difficulties, appeared for Babu Surendranath. It was urged on his behalf that the "observations were made in perfect good faith, and without any motive of any description whatsoever other than the motive to promote the public good." Babu Surendranath moreover expressed regret and apologized, but his apology was not accepted. The case came to a speedy close. Judgment was however reserved till the following morning, when Babu Surendranath was sentenced to two months' imprisonment on the civil side of the Presidency Jail. Fine was not imposed on him on the ground that "it would be a mere nominal penalty." Of the five Judges, viz., the Hon'ble Sir Richard Garth, Chief Justice, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Cunningham, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice McDonnell v. c., the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Norris, and the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Romesh Chunder Mitter, the first four were unanimous in their opinion, the last being the only dissentient Judge in the case. Mr. Justice Mitter differed from his brother Judges on the ground that as in two previous cases of con-

tempt against Judges of the High Court committed by Mr. William Tayler, the then Commissioner of Patna, and the Editor of the *Englishman* Captain Fenwick, as also in another case reported in page 79 of Hyde's Report, apology was not only suggested to be made but accepted, the same precedent ought to be a guide in this matter too which was of a less serious character than the cases cited. As regards the Printer, Babu Ram Kumar Dey, he was left off, Babu Surendra Nath having taken the entire responsibility of the publication on his shoulders. The sentence of imprisonment he took with calmness and shewed much self-possession. He knew beforehand what the verdict would be in his case and was fully prepared for it. He had come from his home at Manirampur that morning fully prepared for the punishment of imprisonment. He had brought down with him in his bag his favourite books and the necessary articles of clothing &c. not omitting his brush and comb, so that on the afternoon when his brothers went to see him in jail they found that he was provided with every necessary article (towels &c.) with the exception of the bedding which Babu Surendranath was under the impression the jail authorities would provide him with. He left the High Court by the Judge's entrance and not in the usual prison van, but in company with one Mr. Browne, one of the bailiffs, from the strand side and arrived safely in the Presidency Jail without the vast crowd of men assembled outside the High Court knowing whether he had gone or not. From the very day, when he was summoned to answer a charge of libel, down to the time of his incarceration, national feeling was roused, as Kristo Das put it, "to its inmost depth." Great was the excitement at the time, and when the news of his incarceration was known, the educated Natives of India expressed regret and sympathy for him; for Surendra Nath had already won their affection and respect by the

amiability of his character, the brilliancy of his oratory, and above all by his public services as an exemplary school-master, an active Municipal Commissioner and as a great agitator and worker in the field of political reform. On the day when he was imprisoned, some four thousand persons assembled outside the High Court, and were refused admission on the ground that they would create a row there. To avoid these crowds, Babu Surendranath was conveyed to the Jail by an unusual route and under unusual precautions. What afterwards happened we shall describe in the sober words of the now defunct newspaper, *The Indian Empire*.

"We have, since the memorable 5th May, talked the matter over with the oldest that live amongst us,—such whose memory carries them back to the days of Lord William Bentinck and, we have been assured by them that the agitation which has followed Babu Surendra Nath Banerji's imprisonment has been quite unprecedented. At first, people thought that the agitation was confined to those who, to use an Anglo-Indian contemporary's humorous language, "can successfully plead minority in a Civil Court." But, every hour, the agitation began to swell, till it resembled a wild fire, and spread all over the length and breadth of the vast peninsula, among all shades of creeds and castes, and compassed men of different ages and of different positions in society. It is no exaggeration to say that there is scarcely any remarkable town in all India that has not echoed the sound of sorrow, sympathy and indignation; and, we are strictly within the limits of truth when we say that there is scarcely an educated community in India that has not contributed its mite to swell the universal chorus, nay, the masses, proverbially inert and indifferent as to the outside world, have spoken and made signs. There are marks of sorrow and joy, despair and hope, determination and earnestness on every intelligent face; the native Calcutta is all bustle and

talk and action, and we are sure all other cities are not otherwise."

"The illustrious prisoner is literally overflowed with letters and telegrams, expressing sympathy, conveying condolence and offers of pecuniary help. Nay, our ladies have not been slow in signifying their heartfelt sympathy with the wife of the illustrious husband in her hours of grief and sorrow. The Presidency Jail has already, during the fortnight, received visitors the like of which so far as their position, character and respectability are concerned, was never seen before. The rich and the poor, the young and the old, the high and the low, are all of one mind, and of one voice."

Babu Surendranath had now become the idol of the nation. So profound was the impression created by his imprisonment that even officers of Government were affected by it, and some found it impossible to proceed with their work, and closed their offices. This was no conventional sentiment, but the outcome of deep and earnest feeling. Babu Surendranath was overwhelmed with letters and telegrams which continued to pour in in one continued stream. We believe a special peon had to be appointed by the Jail authorities to bring him his letters.

Lord Ripon who was then Viceroy was assailed, every day and every week with countless telegrams sent to him by different public bodies and private individuals, beseeching him to exercise the prerogative of mercy in his case; and it is believed that he would have done so if he possessed such power in contempt cases. That Lord Ripon was greatly moved by the unusual sight of a national agitation in Surendranath's favor, all over India, is a fact which admits of no doubt. We believe frequent telegrams used to pass between him, and the Secretary of State for India on the subject. The Bengal Government refused to accept his resignation as an Honorary Magistrate of

Calcutta, which he tendered as soon as he was imprisoned, and we are in duty bound to say that it was Sir Henry Harrison, who wrote strongly to the Government that his resignation should not be accepted.

Here it is necessary to say one word with regard to the circumstances under which the apology was drawn up. On the 4th of May Babu Surendranath in company with Babu Gonesh Chundra Chundra, the Attorney, went to Mr. W. C. Bonnerjea, Barrister-at-Law, who was then residing in a suburban village. In great hurry, the affidavit was drawn up and read before the Judges. In the cases of Mr. William Tayler and of the Editor of the *Englishman* Captain Fenwick, Sir Barnes Peacock called upon these offending parties to apologize for having made serious reflections on the character of Justice Dwarka Nath Mitter and they were pardoned. But in the case of Babu Surendra Nath, his apology was not accepted and was considered insufficient. The Judges did not seem to make much allowance for the haste with which the affidavit was drawn up. Be that as it may when Babu Surendra Nath was in the Jail, a proposal was made to him from an influential quarter to submit another apology which he refused to do.

On the 4th of July he was released in a very novel way. The officials knew that a great popular demonstration would be made in his honor, and so they thought of taking him out of the Jail in an unprecedented way. The Jailor awoke him at 4 o'clock in the morning, took him up in a hackney carriage and drove him through the Lower Circular Road where they knew the crowds would not muster strong to greet him and thus brought him to his house.

The proceedings of the authorities to prevent the appearance of a popular demonstration at Barrackpur were still more extraordinary and produced results exactly the reverse of what was intended. On the



evening of the 3rd July—the day preceding his release—Mr Stevens, the then Magistrate of the 24-Pergunas, had seen Babu Surendra Nath in Jail and had ascertained from him all particulars regarding the reception which was proposed to be accorded to him by his friends at Barrackpur. Mr. Stevens who was acting under the orders of Mr. Monro then Commissioner of the Presidency Division suggested that no meeting should be held in any house in his honour within Cantonment limits. Babu Surendra Nath replied that every man's house was his castle and deprecated official interference with the undoubted right of the people to held meetings in their own houses. The meeting was held, but a body of Police was drawn up in the front of the house which admirably served the purposes of a guard of honour. Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee arrived at Barrackpur by one of the afternoon trains. The Magistrate was on the platform and a strong body of Police furnished with hand-cuffs guarded the approaches to the station. The military had been ordered to be in readiness the whole day. Traffic was stopped along the way through which Babu Surendra Nath had to pass, and when after the meeting at the friend's house, he proceeded to his own house, a native Assistant Superintendent of Police followed him behind in a carriage to see that he had reached home without the peace of the Empire being disturbed! The folly of these proceedings was only too clearly apparent. These preparations—the presence of the Magistrate of the District and Assistant Superintendents with a large muster of Police force created a great stir in the little town of Barrackpur. In the attempt to suppress a demonstration, the officials did their best to stimulate it. Men, women, and children came in thousands to see Surendranath, and the story of his incarceration was heard by those who, if left to themselves would never have heard of it. Such is sometimes the wisdom of our rulers in India!

The imprisonment of Babu Surendranath Banerjea produced far reaching consequences. Indian unification has been one of the dreams of Babu Surendranath's life. No event within the last few years with which we are acquainted has done so much to hasten forward this great consummation as the incarceration of this great Indian agitator. National feeling was roused to its utmost depths and meetings were held in all parts of India to express sympathy with Surendranath from Dehra Ismail Khan to Chittagong, and from Puna to Berhampur in Madras. National feeling received a distinct stimulus, and under God's providence the unification of the Indian races was advanced in a manner which was as pleasing as it was unique. In Bengal itself, Babu Surendranath's imprisonment was followed by great results : cheap journalism received a new impetus. The *Bangabasi*, we believe increased its circulation at the time by leaps and bounds. The *Sanjibani*, and the *Samaya* were started at this time. People began to feel a new interest in newspapers in the desire to know all about Surendranath. The meetings that were held in Calcutta to express sympathy with Surendranath were unique spectacles of public gathering. The Town Hall could not accommodate the audience. There were three meetings held at one and the same time, and the audience mustered more than 20,000 people. A sight was witnessed on the day of the meeting such as Calcutta had never before seen. The shops in Radha Bazar, and China Bazar were all closed ; these busy haunts of trade and commerce seemed to be deserted places. Busy men absented themselves from their work to obey an overwhelming call of duty and feeling

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A PERSONAL ANECDOTE AND THE FIRST PUBLIC MEETING  
HELD AT KRISHNAGHUR TO EXPRESS SYMPATHY  
WITH BABU SURENDRA NATH.

On Saturday the 4th of May 1883, Babu Surendra Nath was sent to Jail and the sad news of his incarceration spread like wild fire throughout the length and breadth of the land. On the morning of Sunday following, while we were reading newspapers in the lodging house of our esteemed friend Babu Amrita Lal Chatterjea, then Sub-Judge of our native town of Krishnaghur, a student shewed us a letter containing the heart-rending news of the imprisonment of Babu Surendranath. Overpowered with grief and sorrow, we hastened to the leaders of our society, viz, the late lamented Rai Jadunath Roy Bahadur, Zemindar of Krishnaghur, and Babu Prusunna Kumar Bose M.A. B. L., one of the leading members of the local Bar and other distinguished citizens who seemed to be paralyzed by the shocking news just to the same extent as we were. We then requested Babus Jadunath and Prusunna Kumar to call a public meeting on that very day, without any loss of time to express sympathy with Surendranath and they readily acceded to our request. Overpowered with grief and sorrow and burning under a deep sense of wrong we ran from one end of the town to the other, visiting all educated and sensible people of the town requesting them to muster strong at the time of the meeting ; and by 6 o'clock in the evening, the entire educated native community of Krishnaghur numbering over one thousand persons, including influential Zemindars, Pleaders, Doctors, Tradesmen, School-masters assembled in the local Public Library Hall to express sympathy with Babu Surendranath. Rai Jadunath Roy Bahadur took the chair on the occasion, and with his characteristic sense of propriety, calmness and moderation, expressed, on behalf of the entire native population of the district of Nuddea, their sympathy

for Surendranath. A telegram expressing sympathy for him was despatched that very night, and it was resolved at the meeting that by way of shewing the appreciation of Surendranath's services to the country, 16 copies of his newspaper (*Bengalee*) should be subscribed, and the subscriber's names were announced at the meeting. This was, we believe, the first public meeting held in India to express sympathy with him.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION AND  
BABU SURENDRA NATH.

• With the growth of English education in the country, a strong desire arose in the mind of the vast bulk of the educated middle-class that an organized political Association representing the interests of all classes of the native society should be formed. They were unwilling to ally themselves with the British Indian Association which, in spite of its splendid services to the cause of the country, became, from unavoidable circumstances, an apparently exclusive and sectional representative body.

Acting under this feeling the middle-class educated Natives with the active and willing sympathy of the England-returned Bengalees, started the Indian Association on the 26th July 1876. The day must be regarded as memorable in Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee's life. At twelve o'clock of that day he had lost his only son, yet he did not hesitate to come to the meeting (which had chiefly been organized by him) at 4 P.M. And not only was he present, but that when an amendment was moved that the Association, should not be formed, seeing that there was a similar Association, the Indian League, he gave an effective reply which carried the meeting with him. The amendment was lost, and the Indian Association was duly established. Babu Shima Churn Sircar, the author of the *Vyavastha Darpana*, presided at the meeting, and among others the late

Babu Kristo Das Pal, Maharaja Narendra Krishna Bahadur and others were present. Eminent men who had made their marks in learned professions of law, medicine and literature readily flocked to its standard and enlisted themselves as members of this political Association. Men like Mr. M. M. Ghose, Barrister-at-Law, Mr. Anunda Mohun Bose, M.A., Barrister-at-Law, and a Cambridge Wrangler, Babu Mohesh Chundra Chowdry, a distinguished pleader of the Calcutta High Court, Babu Kally Churn Banerjee, the orator, Babu Akhoy Chunder Sirkar, the great Bengali and Sanskrit Scholar and writer, and a host of other men too numerous to be mentioned, became its staunch supporters and Members. And Mr. Anunda Mohun Bose than whom it is difficult to find a better, cool-headed and modest scholar among the enrolled Members, was unanimously elected its Secretary.

But in this country where apathy and indifference soon set in after the first flush of success is over, an energetic, indefatigable and enthusiastic worker is essentially necessary to set the political engine in perpetual motion. And that man was Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee. He is not only the chief-driver of this political machine, but he is its fireman too. He brings coal and firewood, kindles them into a flame with unabated breath, looks minutely into all the minutest parts of it, keeps it in workable order with the skilfulness of an expert political mechanic, and sets the machine in motion whenever the best interests of the country requires it. The vast net work of Branch Political Associations established in every nook and corner of Bengal and Northern India is the immediate result of his unceasing effort for the last 14 years. And for this splendid and glorious work, he is called the "people's man" by his countrymen, and by his enemies as "the agitator." The task of infusing political activity into the dormant state of Mbfusil life is not his only title to our admiration. The *sine quanon* of a political

corporate body in a conquered country like India, is that it should have a man or a number of men ready at every emergency to write elaborate, well-reasoned and well-expressed memorials to the Government on sundry matters affecting the well-being of the society at large. Surendranath as the Secretary of the Indian Association is an adept in drawing up public memorials, and since the death of the Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal a better memorial writer than Mr. Banerjee we have not found.

The first question which the Indian Association took up was the raising of the limit of age for the Open Competitive Examination for the Civil Service of India. Lord Salisbury had reduced the limit of age from 21 to 19 years. A great public meeting was held in the Town Hall to protest against this reduction and in connection with it an agitation was set on foot by the Indian Association the like of which had never before been seen in India. Babu Surendranath with the memorial which had been adopted at Calcutta travelled through all the great towns of Northern India holding meetings and asking his countrymen to adopt the memorial. He visited Bombay, Madras, Puna, Surat and Ahmedabad on the same mission and was equally successful. For the first time it was practically demonstrated in modern Indian history that whatever might be our differences in religion, language, or social customs, the varied races of India can meet upon the same ground of action for political purposes. The possibility of political unity was thus amply demonstrated and it produced splendid results in the not very distant future in the stupendous organization of the Congress. Mr. Lalmohan Ghose went to England with these memorials as the Delegate of the Indian Association and the result of his speech at Willis' Room was the creation of the Statutory Civil Service. Once again in 1879 and, in 1884 Babu Surendranath Banerjee made a tour through upper India advancing

the cause of Indian unity and sowing the seeds of political life in those parts of the country. It must here be noted that Babu Surendranath Banerjea has often shown considerable political insight. Thus the Indian Association took up the question of Local Self-Government even before Lord Ripon had made his famous declaration at Dehra Dun that he had it in charge from Her Gracious Majesty the Queen Empress 'to associate the people in the management of their local affairs, and agents of the Association had visited several places in the Mufosil with a view to induce the Municipalities to pray for the Elective system in their constitution under the provisions of the old law which has now been repealed. The Association kept up a brisk agitation in connection with the question of Local Self-Government and did much to popularize it. It took a leading part in inducing the Government to concede to the Municipalities the right of electing their Chairman. Meetings were held all over Bengal, and Lord Ripon's Government deferred to this universal 'expression of public opinion and made this important concession.

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LIFE OF DR. RAM LALL CHUCKERBUTTY RAI BAHADUR.

## CHAPTER I.

### HIS PARENTAGE.

It has been said often times, both in season and out of season, by the hostile Anglo-Indian Press and by some officials that Bengalees out of Bengal are mere nonentities; that they are disliked and not respected and loved by the people of the North-West, and Punjab where they happen to hold high offices in the Government Service; and that, therefore the Bengalees should on no account be appointed to any post in

these Provinces. To prove how fallacious is this sort of argument, we have thought fit to describe in this part of our book the life of Dr. Ram Lall Chuckerbutty whose marvellous success as a Medical Practitioner in the North-Western Provinces gives a lie direct to the mischievous statement made by the enemies of the Bengalee race. Besides, as Dr. Ram Lall is our personal friend and neighbour of high exemplary moral character, generous and kind to the poor, affable and always ready and willing to help his poor friends, we give a brief description of his noble and valuable life, so far as it is known to us.

Rai Ram Lall Chuckerbutty Bahadur was born at Krishnaghur in the District of Nuddea on the 30th May 1843, and comes from a very respectable Brahmin family. It is said that his ancestors settled at Krishnaghur in the time of the illustrious Maharajadhiraj Krishna Chundra Roy under whom they served for a generation or two. The noble Maharaja once condescended to honor Ram Lall's family with his gracious presence during the Durga Puja ceremony celebrated in his house.

We subjoin below a genealogy showing Ram Lall's descent.

Goopy Nath Chuckerbutty—Great-grandfather.

Hara Chundra Chuckerbutty—Grandfather.

Kailash Chunder Chuckerbutty—Father.

Ram Lall Chuckerbutty.—°

Koilash Chundra the father of Babu Ram Lall died in February 1881, leaving behind him his son to look after the family. He was a gentleman of agreeable nature; and his large heartedness, amiability of character and disposition combined with his readiness

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\* Ram Lall originally belonged to the Mukhopadhyaya family; but the title of "Chuckerbutty" which he now bears was conferred on it by the late Moharajadhiraj Krishna Chunder Roy as a mark of distinction.



to help the poor and indigent won for him the love and admiration of all. He was twice married. By the first wife he had 3 children, one son and two daughters, of whom Ram Lall is the eldest. By his second wife he had five children of whom only one son and one daughter are still living. Ram Lall lost his mother at the tender age of 9 years. Thus he was deprived of the tender care and affection of a loving mother at an age when he stood in need of them for the formation of his character, and his education was naturally neglected.

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#### HIS EDUCATION.

Ram Lall was sent to a local *Patsala* at the age of 7 years where he remained till his fourteenth year. Babu Beni Kanta Mullick of the Mullick family of Krishnaghur was his *Gurumohashoya*. From his boyhood Ram Lall was zealous and persevering in his endeavours to acquire knowledge, and showed an unwearied energy of body and mind, sharpness of intellect, and tenderness of heart. His regard and esteem for his tutors were exemplary and they still remain unabated. His relatives and his neighbours remarked that his appearance and features apparently bore the stamp of his future greatness. In his fourteenth year he joined the local Church Mission School which was then under the immediate control and supervision of the Rev. Mr. Dyson. This noble minded and Christian gentleman had a very high opinion of Ram Lall's ability and character. He used to deliver lectures on morals, and Ram Lall felt great pleasure in attentively hearing them and deriving much benefit from his teachings. The venerable Missionarie's teachings were profitably sown on a fertile soil. It was his strict adherence to the principles of morality and rectitude, which were thus instilled into his youthful mind, that made him rise to so eminent a position in life. They

have been the guiding principles of his life and have actuated him in all his actions and deeds.

• Although Ram Lall commenced his English studies at an advanced age, yet his industry and capacity for work soon enabled him to rise to the preparatory Entrance class of the Krishnaghur College, which he joined in the year 1859. It is said that he at first showed a little deficiency in Mathematics when he was in the lower classes; but by his steady perseverance and through the kind exertion of his able tutor Babu Woomesh Chundra Dutt the late distinguished professor of the Krishnaghur College, and now a pensioner, he was soon able to make a tolerable progress in that subject. In the year 1860, he passed his Entrance Examination in the first division and stood very high in the list of successful candidates obtaining a Junior scholarship. He then joined the College classes to prepare himself for the F. A. Examination; but he could not continue his studies to his utter disappointment. It was the accursed dreadful malarious fever of 1864 that devastated the town, and prostrated his health and ultimately compelled him to give up his studies at Krishnaghur, while reading in the First Year Class.

He now conceived the idea of joining the Calcutta Medical College but his father was opposed to it. He then took the advice of Professor Woomesh Chundra Dutt, his beloved teacher and a kind neighbour and resolved upon going down to Calcutta. He would not hear any body but prepared himself to face any obstacle that might come in his way. He now set about devising means for the completion of his secret object. Finding it hopeless to induce his father to accede to his request, he could not think of no other alternative than to bolt away from his father's house depending upon God who helps those who help themselves.

One night when all the members of the family

were fast asleep Ram Lall escaped from his house with the avowed intention of never returning home until he reached the great goal of his life. He had no money with him except Rs. 5 which he had managed to obtain from his grandmother who had no knowledge of his secret intentions. Thus Ram Lall scarcely yet out of his teens, was driven adrift into the wide world of which he had very little experience. He came down to Calcutta without the least delay as a stranger in an unknown place. He would have been put to great troubles, had it not been for an old acquaintance of his, Babu Upendra Chundra Mullick, a clerk of the Calcutta High Court. He knew the place where his friend was living, and went straight to his house where he met with a hearty welcome. When Ram Lall's father came to know that his son had gone to Calcutta and determined to join Medical College he became all wrath, resolved not to advance a single farthing in the shape of help to his runaway son. But Ram Lall was not a man to yield. He would rather sacrifice his life on the altar of knowledge than to be a heavy burden on his family. The quarter in which Ram Lall put up, being unhealthy he thought of removing to better locality as soon as a favorable opportunity presented itself. Moreover his friend was not so well off, as to allow him to remain in his lodging. He was therefore anxious to relieve his friend but how was he to bring it about? He had no other friend in the town to help him in this crisis. The only inducement which made him come to Calcutta was the hope of obtaining a scholarship which was then awarded to the first ten successful candidates who joined the Medical College after passing the Entrance Examination. But on his arrival at Calcutta he heard that no scholarship was available, it having been stopped from the session of 1864-65 when he had a mind to get himself admitted into the College. He now came to learn that the only concession in favor of such

candidates was that they would be taken free. He now made up his mind to become a private tutor to secure means of livelihood before he entered the Medical College. And it was after considerable difficulty he secured such an appointment. One afternoon he accidentally met a gentleman who took pity on him and promised to place his two sons under his tuition on a salary of Rs. 8 per month. This gentleman generously advanced him one month's pay which was a great favor shown to him in those days of his dire necessity. With this scanty means of subsistence Ram Lall decided upon leaving his friend's house and going to the Hindu Hostel for students. In this Hostel the charge was Rs. 10 for the upper story and Rs. 8 for the lower one; and he preferred the latter to the former, and lived there with one of his friends having had to pay Rs. 7 only as his own share. Thus he saved one rupee every month from his present income for his pocket expenses such as tiffin, writing materials &c. After this he got himself admitted free into the first year class of the Calcutta Medical College, and with the money advanced him by his employer he purchased a book on "Human Osteology" and some writing materials. For full one year Ram Lall experienced great hardships which to a young man of his age, who had seen better days was more than unbearable. His income being too small he could not purchase all the books that were taught in the class. He used to copy out books he could not pay for and prepare his daily lessons. With an unequal zeal and perseverance he prosecuted his studies in the class which attracted the attention of his teachers. One circumstance worthy of note should be mentioned here showing Ram Lall's yearning for scientific knowledge. He had a natural taste for Anatomy and dissection. He used to pay the *Dom* in charge of the dissecting room something at times from his clear saving of one rupee, so that he might be allowed to

examine the dead bodies whenever necessary. After the College hours he used to repair to the dissecting room and carefully examine the bodies.

At the final examination of the first year he obtained a scholarship which added to his present income enabled him to live with more ease and comfort. It must be mentioned here that at the end of one year, his father's indifference towards him disappeared and his sympathy for his once run-away son was evoked by the unmistakable sign of Ram Lall's future greatness. His father now regularly commenced to help him with money which enabled him to give up the tutorship and direct his whole attention to the prosecution of his studies. He had no longer to copy out books but was in a position to buy them.

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## CHAPTER II.

### RAM LALL'S MEDICAL COLLEGE CAREER.

Ram Lall read in the Medical College for full five years during which period he was diligent, attentive and obedient to his teachers to a remarkable degree. By his strenuous exertions he retained a commendable position in the class. He was a favorite pupil with the Professors and his teachers and they had a high opinion of his scholastic career. In all the examinations he held high positions and obtained prizes. In his Fourth Year Class examination which is generally held in competition with the Fifth Year Class he acquitted himself creditably and obtained honors in clinical medicine and surgery securing high marks in all other subjects. At his final examination he was also equally successful. After coming out of the college, he constantly thought how he could help his family which was then not in so prosperous a condition as it had been before owing to its being divided into many sub-divisions. His friends and relatives now advised him to commence his practice at

Ranaghat. Ram Lall agreed to their proposal, but before giving effect to it he thought it proper to go down once again to Calcutta to consult his teachers who were very much interested in his welfare. On his arrival there he was offered the post of one of the House Physicians of the Medical College—a post which was reserved only for distinguished students. His success both as a student and a House Physician cannot be better depicted than by giving extracts from a few certificates given to him by the then Principal of the College, Dr. Norman Chevers and his colleagues at the time of Ram Lall's leaving them for Allahabad.

MEDICAL COLLEGE,

*Calcutta, 29th June, 1871.*

MY DEAR DR. JONES,

I BEG to recommend to you Sub-Assistant-Surgeon Ram Lall Chuckerbutty, who has been appointed to serve under your orders. I have watched his progress as a pupil here, and he has been for two years one of our House Physicians.

I only say what the whole of the staff of this institution agree with me in thinking, that he is an officer of sterling worth and great promise, well-informed, unassuming and trustworthy.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

(Sd.)

NORMAN CHEVERS.

I HAVE much pleasure in stating that I have known Baboo Ram Lall Chuckerbutty for about four years, first as a student at the Medical College, and afterwards as House Physician in the Medical College Hospital, and I have always thought highly of him both as regards good moral conduct and diligence, and also for his great progress in the acquisition of professional skill and knowledge.

(Sd.)

J. P. SMITH, M. D.,

CALCUTTA;  
*20th June, 1871.*

## MEDICAL COLLEGE.

*Calcutta 27th June 1871,*

BABOO Ram Lall Chuckerbutty was a very distinguished student of the Medical College, and on leaving College won for himself the honorable position of Physician's assistant in the Hospital, a post which he has held with much credit during the past two years. He leaves this post to take up a Hospital appointment at Allahabad, which, though a junior in the service, he has, on account of his professional ability, been selected to fill.

It gives me great pleasure to bear testimony to Baboo Ram Lall Chuckerbutty's professional ability and character, and to express my conviction that he will make for himself a distinguished position in the service to which he belongs.

(Sd.) F. N. MACNAMARA, M. D.,  
*Professor, of Chemistry,*  
*Medical College.*

## CHAPTER III.

## RAM LALL'S PROFESSIONAL CAREER.

The first scene of his professional career after leaving Calcutta was at Allahabad. Sir William Muir the then Lieutenant-Governor of the North Western Provinces thought it expedient to have a second physician attached to the Colvin Dispensary at Allahabad. Through the recommendation of Sir Joseph Fayrer K.C.S.I. and the late Dr. Norman Chevers, Ram Lall was selected to fill up such an important post and was placed in charge of the Female ward of that Dispensary. His great assiduity, professional ability and constant solicitude for the well-being of his patients placed under his care, at once made him very popular and the daily attendance of patients at the Hospital considerably increased. The amount of medical and surgical relief given to the people of the Allahabad District was very great and enabled him to obtain from the Government its thanks and praises which he so richly deserved. The first circumstance of note in connection with his useful service in the Colvin Hospital was that before 1871

the eye operations for cataracts was seldom performed in these Provinces, and it was through the labour and industry of Dr. J. Jones and Ram Lall a large number of cataract cases was operated on. This gave an impetus to this kind of surgical relief which has since been adopted on a large scale in several dispensaries in these Provinces.

The second circumstance of note was that a mid-wifery class was opened in connection with the Dispensary. It was thought by such high authority as Dr. W. Walker, the late Inspector General of Civil Hospitals and dispensaries N.W.P., and Oudh, that the training of mid-wives for the benefit of women of these Provinces was a great want. Ram Lall took this matter into his head and opened the mid-wifery class which was entirely under his control. It was supported by the liberality of the native gentlemen of that city and was a complete success under Ram Lall's fostering care. He worked for the class without any remuneration, and it was only through his exertions that the whole native community was induced to subscribe towards its maintenance. The following extracts from the official records bear testimony to the services rendered by the subject by our sketch.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT ON THE DISPENSARIES OF  
THE NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES FOR THE YEAR 1872.

To

THE SUPERINTENDENT

• ALLAHABAD, Dispensaries.

*Dated Allahabad, the 7th Novembar, 1873.*

SIR,

I have to request the favor of your communicating to Sub-Assistant Surgeon Ram Lall Chuokerbutty, the annexed extract of G. O. No. 897A., dated 22nd ultimo in the Medical Department.

(Sd.) W. WALKER,

*Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals  
and Dispensaries N. W. Provinces.*



Extract from letter No. 897A., dated 22nd October, 1873, from the Secretary to Government N. W. P., to the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals and Dispensaries, N. W. P.

II. "His Honor again notices with approbation the labors of Sub-Assistant Surgeon Ram Lall Chuckerbutty, at Allahabad, and the liberality of the Native Gentlemen who supported pupils at the Female School."

The official, under whom he served, while at Allahabad thus spoke of him.

I HAD experience of the work of Assistant Surgeon Ram Lall Chuckerbutty while acting as Civil Surgeon of Allahabad, and am able to testify to his industry, zeal and ability. He is a most deserving officer, and I shall be glad to hear of his promotion. I feel confident that he will do credit to any Medical appointment to which he may be nominated.

He managed a female Mid-wifery class at the Allahabad Dispensary, and his exertions in connection with it were most praise-worthy and received special commendation from Government:

(Sid.) J. JONES, M. D.,  
*Offg. Civil Surgeon, Saharanpur.*

*17th December, 1874.*

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ALLAHABAD,  
*January 31st, 1875.*

MY DEAR DR. BROWN,

Baboo Ram Lall Chuckerbutty, Assistant Surgeon, attached to the Colvin Hospital here, has learned that there is some prospect of some Civil Medical charge in Bengal being made over to Assistant Surgeons, and he not unnaturally is anxious to have his claims brought forward. He distinguished himself highly as a student, was for two years house Physician at Medical College Hospital, and since his appointment here, has given every satisfaction to Dr. Jones, Irving and myself.

Baboo Ram Lall has year by year received the thanks of the Government, North-Western Provinces, for his zeal and efficiency, and it was suggested in the last Annual Report of the Dispensaries North-Western Provinces that "the Lieutenant Governor's appreciation of his unrequited services should be communicated to the Surgeon-General of the Indian Medical Department.

(True copy.)

(Sd.) H. S. SMITH.

His success as a private practitioner at Allahabad was all that could be desired. His careful and judicious treatment of cases entrusted to his charge, and his high moral character soon made him popular amongst the native community. So much did the people set a high value on his services that on the eve of his departure they convened a public meeting to express their great regret and presented him with a gold watch and chain.

The *Pioneer* of the 9th September, 1876 wrote as follows on the subject.

"Assistant Surgeon Ram Lall Chuckerbutty has been transferred from Allahabad to Moradabad. The Native community of Allahabad, with whom he was very popular, to mark their appreciation of the services rendered by the Assistant Surgeon, presented him with a gold watch and chain previous to his departure, and further mustered strong on the railway platform to take leave of him on the day he was leaving for his new station; Lalla Gya Pershad, one of the representative men of the community accompanying him a part of the way."

In September 1876, he was transferred from Allahabad to Moradabad. Here he succeeded to a great extent in popularizing the European system of treatment in that city. Ram Lall's sterling qualities soon eclipsed the fame and reputation of the native physicians, and people came in flocks to him for medical help. His work in the Dispensary was also very sa-

tisfactory which attracted the notice of Government. His reputation as a very good physician spread far and wide throughout the Rohilkhund Division so much so that the semi-independent chief of Rampore often availed himself of Ram Lall's services and when he was leaving for Benares he expressed his eager desire of retaining him in his employ on a high salary. But Ram Lall could not be induced to give up Government service. How did Ram Lall won the love of the people of Moradabad will appear from the following extracts :—

The *Pioneer* of the 3rd September 1877 wrote as follows on the public meeting held there in his honor.

A large meeting of the native gentry of Moradabad was held on the evening of the 18th August in the Moradabad Mission School hall, to present an address and some handsome presents to Assistant Surgeon Ram Lall Chuckerbutty, who has been transferred to Benares. The European Civil Surgeon occupied the chair. Baboo Ram Lall induced the people of Moradabad generally to adopt the English mode of medical treatment, and the systems followed by the native practitioner (*hakims* and *baidas*), which so long had a firm hold upon the natives of this place, have been nearly abandoned.

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**EXTRACT FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING  
HELD AT MORADABAD, ON THE OCCASION OF  
RAM LALL CHUCKERBUTTY'S TRANSFER  
TO BENARES.**

We have assembled here this night to present you this address on the occasion of your leaving our city for Benares.

In presenting you this, we do nothing more than what we believe is our duty. You have, during this short space of 12 months, done so much good for us, that the impression produced by it upon our minds is not to be easily obliterated.

The details of the benefits for which we stand indebted to you are too many to be enumerated here.

You have in the first place introduced English medicines into families which never before touched even the dispensary water. This you have accomplished with no small labour by proving to their satisfaction the efficacy of the English treatment, which ere this was looked upon as far inferior to the treatment of our Hakims. •

The care and attention you have bestowed upon your patients (disregarding all personal gains) has convinced us that wonders may be accomplished by well-timed assiduity. •

The manner in which you have done the work of the dispensary must be regarded as exemplary, and the poor as well as rich have both been equally benefitted by you. Your private character in receiving such of us as have had occasion to go to your residence has worked so strongly upon our feelings that we are unable to find sufficiently strong terms to express it.

No suitable return for all these benefits has been made on our part, and we are doubly grieved to find that a man of your character (we mean both in public and private capacity) is leaving our city for another, but as we have no hands in the affairs of our Government \* \* \* we must be content with giving you our best wishes for prosperity in this, and proper reward in the world to come. In commemoration of your stay at this place we make a present of the following articles which we hope will be acceptable :—  
Silver cap, gold ring, silver attardan.

(Sd.) W. R. MURPHY, OFFG. CIVIL SURGEON,  
*President of the Committee.*

RUTTUN CHUND, B. A.,  
*Pleader, High Court, Secretary.*

*August 18th, 1877.*

During his stay at Moradabad he was also placed in charge of the Civil Medical duties of that station, in addition to his own, during the absence on deputation of Surgeon Major J. H. Loch, the Civil Surgeon.

In August 1877 he was transferred from Moradabad to the Bhilapera dispensary at Benares in which

city too his success, both as a Government servant and a private practitioner, was equally great as will appear from the extract given below :—

PARA. 74. "The work at Moradabad is highly creditable , to Assistant Surgeon Ram Lall Chuckerbutty, whose work at Benares I have noticed is due to the performance of a large portion of the Surgical work previous to his transfer."

He was so much popular with the people of Benares that when Dr. W. Walker wanted to get him to the Bulrampur Hospital Lucknow on an increased salary, several representatives of the native community waited upon him on deputation and expressed their unwillingness to part with Ram Lall's services. Dr. W. R. Hooper, the Civil Surgeon of the station spoke very highly of him :—

In February 1879, Dr. W. Walker thought it proper to appoint a better man to the charge of the Bulrampur Hospital Lucknow—the largest Hospital in these Provinces—and offered the post to Ram Lall of whom he had always a very high opinion. When Ram Lall came, he found the Hospital not at all popular. For these many years with what energy and assiduity he has been working for it need not be dilated upon. At present it ranks as one of the best and the most popular hospitals in these Provinces. As a medical practitioner he has earned the confidence of the nobility and the gentry of Lucknow. His fame and reputation as a skilful physician, is not only confined to the District of Lucknow but has spread far and wide throughout the Province, and the late Moharaja of Bulrampur, Sir Digbijoy Singh Bahadur K. C. S. I., the Hon'ble Raja Amir Hussain Khan of Mahmudabad, and the Hon'ble Moharaja Protap Narain Singh of Mahdowna, in Ajudhya obtained from Government his services for attending on them when they were ill. The Lady Lyall lying-in Hospital and the Female Medical School opened under the auspices of Lady Dufferin have

greatly prospered in his time and Dr. J. Cleghorn, the Director and Supervisor of both publicly recognized his services in connection therewith at a grand *Durbar* held in December 4th, 1888 under the Presidency of H. E. the Countess of Dufferin and Ava.

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#### RAM LALL'S DEPUTATION TO BULRAMPUR IN OUDH.

The late Moharaja Sir Digbijoy Singh Bahadur K. C. S. I. of Bulrampur had a fall from an elephant while engaged in tiger-hunting at the foot of the Himalayas in 1880. The injuries he sustained were very serious and His Highness was in a dangerous state from which there was little hope of his recovery. At first His Highness placed himself under the skilful treatment of Dr. Higginson, the Civil Surgeon of Gondah, but the talented officer was soon called away to some other urgent duty and Ram Lall was telegraphed to relieve him. Having received direct orders from the Lieutenant-Governor N. W. P., he at once proceeded to Bonkatwa, at the foot of the Himalayas, where the Hon'ble Moharaja had taken quarters after the accident. Under Ram Lall's skilful and considerate treatment His Highness derived prompt relief, and in less than two months he was in a position to be removed to his palace at Bulrampur. It took six months before he could completely recover from the injuries sustained. After His Highness' recovery Ram Lall's services were still retained and he remained in attendance on him for more than a year from May 1880 to November 1881. His urbanity, simplicity of character, and endearing habits made him very popular at Bulrampur. At a grand *Durbar* held in honor of his birth-day festival, after his complete recovery, in which several Taluqdars of Oudh and a host of his friends and dependants including some European officers of Gonda were present, His Highness

munificently gave Ram Lall valuable presents and granted him a pension of Rs. 100 per month.

Several addresses were given on the occasion both by the Maharaja himself and his *amlaks* expressive of their appreciation of Ram Lall's services from which we make the following extract :—

EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS PRESENTED TO RAM  
LALL CHUCKERBUTTY BY HIS HIGHNESS THE  
MAHARAJA OF BALRAMPUR., K. C. S. I.,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE BIRTH-DAY  
FESTIVAL AFTER HIS RECOVERY.

\* \* \* Baboo Ram Lall reached Bankatwa without the least delay, and since the day he took charge of me, I have much pleasure to say that my sufferings gave place to ease and comfort.

\* \* \*

I have to thank Baboo Ram Lall Chuckerbutty, Assistant Surgeon, not only for his very able, skilful and considerate treatment, but for the great attention, rigid watch, and extraordinary care he paid with his best heart to me. \* \* \* I wish at heart that the relations between myself and Baboo Ram Lall may remain close and cordial for ever, &c., &c., &c.,

(Sd.) DIGBIJAI SINGH,  
MAHARAJA OF BALRAMPUR.

NEEL BAGH, BALRAMPUR,  
12th October, 1880.

HIS DEPUTATION TO MAHMUDAABAD.

When Rajah Amir Hussain Khan fell ill in 1884, he secured Ram Lall's services for one year from July 1884 to July 1885. Here also his efforts were crowned with success. In recognition of his services, he was presented with rich presents and obtained a pension of Rs. 50 per month. On the eve of his departure from the place the following address was given :—

To

BABOO RAM LALL CHUCKERBUTTY,

ASSISTANT SURGEON.

DOCTOR SAHIB—

I thank you not only on my behalf, but also on behalf of my cousin Rajah Mohammad Kazim Hosein Khan Bahadur of Bilhara, my family, relations and the officers of my staff. I shall always remember with gratitude and pleasure the benefits I have derived from your able and skilful treatment. I have full confidence in you and have a very high opinion of your professional knowledge and skill. I have watched with interest not only your considerate treatment but also the great attention you cheerfully bestow on your patients. Your affability and affection for those who come under your treatment have become proverbial here.

2. It gives me great pleasure to declare, and I trust all present in this Durbar will concur with me in saying that your uprightness and good manners have extorted our respect and admiration. You leave in this station a host of friends and admirers,—nay, I think that there is not a single person in this town who speaks unfavorably of you.

4. Before concluding, I consider it my duty to thank most sincerely His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, N. W. Provinces, and Chief Commissioner of Oudh, for his very kindly lending me your services.

5. I am also thankful to you, gentlemen, for your presence in this Durbar and for the assurances you give me of your respect for the worthy gentleman to whom we are bidding farewell, and for your good-will towards me and mine.

MAHMUDABAD :  
The 17th March 1885.

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Yours sincerely,

AMIR HASAN,

*Rajah of Mahmudabad.*



## HIS DEPUTATION TO AJODHYA.

In August 1886, he was deputed by Government to treat Hon'ble Moharaja Protap Narain Singh of Mahdowna in Ajodhya. Here he was equally successful and his services were remunerated by valuable presents. The following address was given when he was leaving Ajodhya :—

To

BABOO RAM LAL CHUCKERBUTTY,  
*Assistant Surgeon, Balrampore, Hospital,*  
 LUCKNOW.

DOCTOR SAHIB,

Before alluding to the great benefit which I have derived from your treatment, I feel it my bounden duty to offer my sincere thanks to the all-merciful God for His great mercy in restoring me to health. I beg to thank most cordially, in the next place, His Honor the Lieutenant Governor, the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals, North-Western Provinces and Oudh, for their kindly lending your services to me.

To you, who have been my medical attendant in particular, my best thanks are due for the very great care and attention bestowed on me, as well as for the kind expressions contained in your address to me. I shall always remember with gratitude and pleasure the benefits which I have derived from your able and skilful treatment.

I feel very happy to say, and I trust all present in this Durbar, will fully agree with me, that the many excellencies of your character have won our admiration. I wish heartily that the relation between you and me may remain cordial for ever. I take this opportunity of assuring you that my respected father, Baboo Narsing Narain Singh Bahadur and my other relations, have the same regard for you as I have, and fully concur with me in all that I have said.

AJODHYA ;

Yours very sincerely,

The 28th August 1886.

PROTAP NARAIN SINGH.

*Taluqdar, Mahdowna and Raj Gonda &c. &c.*

Here we mention a circumstance showing how the Government has recognized Ram Lall's services. In 1884-85 a circular was issued by the Surgeon-General to the Government of India requiring Assistant Surgeons to pass their Septennial Examination, without an exception, failing which they would make themselves liable to stoppage of promotion. But such were Ram Lall's good services that the Government of India was pleased to exempt him from further professional examinations on the recommendation of the Inspector General of N. W. P. and Oudh.

In view of the distinguished and meritorious services, the Government has of late conferred upon Ram Lall the title of "Rai Bahadur" as a personal distinction.

"His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General is pleased to confer upon Assistant-Surgeon Ram Lall Chakravatti, attached to the Bulrampur Hospital, Lucknow, the title of "Rai Bahadur" as a personal distinction.

H. M. DURAND,

*Secy. to the Govt. of India.*

That the Government has conferred the title on a deserving man is beyond doubt. It pleased his friends and admirers, and a grand evening party was held at the premises of Mr. Nabi Ullah, Barrister-at-Law in which his European, Mahomadan and Hindu friends assembled together to congratulate the doctor on the title conferred on him.

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#### RAM LALL'S MARRIAGE AND CHARACTER.

Ram Lall was twice married. He married a lady in the year 1860—who died within 2 years

after marriage. On the death of his first wife he determined not to marry again, but he was persuaded by his father and other relatives to do so in 1868 when he was about to finish his College career. He accordingly married his present wife Sreemutee Giree Bala Debi, daughter of the late Babu Lall Mohun Ghosal of Routgram—a village in the district of Burdwan. By this wife he had six children of whom 2 sons and 2 daughters are now living. The two sons, Hari Das and Sarat Chandra are still very young, one being of 11, and the other 9 years of age. Ram Lall's wife is a good and accomplished lady.

Generous to his poor relatives and friends, Ram Lall's private life is extremely simple and pure. His generosity to the helpless and the distressed sometimes degenerates into extravagance and his purse is often times taxed to an extent which his ordinary income is unable to bear. He has restored several fallen families by helping them with money. It is an innate principle of his conduct to help the poor and the distressed. In his private practice as a physician he is not only well-known for his professional ability, but also, for his generosity and natural sympathy for the sick and the poor whom he attends gratuitously without accepting any remuneration whatever. His high sense of duty, great public spirit, simple and unassuming character, unimpeachable honesty, and endearing social habits please all who come in contact with him.

In order to shew his self-sacrificing spirit one circumstance requires special mention. When Ram Lall's father was on his death-bed he voluntarily expressed his desire of relinquishing the share of his ancestral property both movable and immovable. His late lamented father accordingly executed a Will which on his death-bed wholly excluded him from the ancestral property. Is it not an extraordinary proof of Ram Lall's nobility of heart and uncommon self-sacrifice which is very rare in these days.

## LIFE OF BABU RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

## CHAPTER I.

## HIS PARENTAGE AND EARLY EDUCATION.

Babu Protap Chunder Mozoomdar in his celebrated biography of the immortal Keshub Chunder Sen, in the introductory chapter, says that before the establishment of the Hindu College in 1817, a batch of English educated men like Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Sir Raja Radhakant Deb (Dey ?) Bahadoor, and Dewan Ram Kamal Sen arose whom he calls the first generation of educated Hindus. "The next generation of men" included the illustrious subject of our sketch, and moral men like Babu Ram Tonoo Lahiry, the late lamented Rev. K. M. Banerjea, the late Babu Rusik Kristo Mullick and a host of other equally good men, whose names will appear in the private letters of Babu Ram Gopal Ghose published in another chapter. "The late Ram Gopal Ghose," Babu Protap Chunder says, "was perhaps a prominent representative" of his class, and "retained some trace of the original vigour of the Hindu mind."

Babu Ram Gopal and his associates, viz., Babu Ram Tonoo Lahiry, the late Rev. K. M. Banerjea, Babus Rusik Kristo Mullick, Radhanath Sikdar and others were all representative men of the class to which they belonged. In describing the time in which these men lived, Babu Protap Chunder says "that when Keshub Chunder Sen turned out of college in 1858, Hindu Society in Bengal presented a chaos." Now, with all due deference to the opinion of the learned biographer, we are humbly of opinion that this is a statement not quite correct. Whatever may have been the social eccentricities displayed by some thoughtless members of mushroom rich families in Calcutta, the Hindu Society in Bengal, in those halcyon days, was celebrated for its deep religiousness, purity, benevolence, and self-

sacrifice. With these preliminary remarks, we now proceed to the narration of the chief events in the life of this illustrious man.

Babu Ram Gopal Ghose was the son of Babu Gobind Chunder Ghose, a man of some competence but not rich. His grand-father Babu Jogo Mohun Ghose was an employe in the Firm of Messrs. King, Hamilton & Co., of Calcutta, and was no better off than the father of Ram Gopal. Bondipara in the district of Hoogly was the original place from which the family migrated to Bagatee, a village a mile off from Tribeny. It was perhaps the grand-father of Ram Gopal who migrated from Bagatee to Calcutta, where Ram Gopal was born in the month of Ashin of the Bengalee year 1221, corresponding to the month of October, 1815. The father of Babu Ram Gopal had a shop in China Bazar as a Marine-Store-keeper and passed his days in somewhat straitened circumstances. It is said that he received the rudiments of English education at a little school kept by one Mr. Sherbourne, an East-Indian. But his son-in-law, Babu Beer Chundra Miter assures us that Ram Gopal received his early education at the Hare preparatory School and joined the Hindoo College in 1824, when he was about nine years of age. Babu Ram Tonoo Lahiry, one of Babu Ram Gopal's intimate friends now living, tells us that one Mr. Rogers, a European partner in the Firm of Messrs Hamilton & Co., used to pay his schooling-fee, his father being too poor to pay all the expenses of his education. Babu Koilash Chundra Bose in his lecture on Ram Gopal Ghose, delivered in 1868, says that Ram Gopal soon after his admission into the College, so endeared himself, by his lovely manners and display of intellect, to David Hare that the great philanthropist put his name on the free list of students. The interesting details of his scholastic career have now fallen into obscurity, and nothing can be now positively known except what men like Babu Koilash Chundra Bose

had said on the subject. From the same authority we come to learn that, while Ram Gopal was "barely 14 years old," he was promoted to the second class of the Hindu College, of which "one Mr. Halifax was then the teacher."

It was about this time, viz., perhaps in the year 1829, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio was appointed a teacher of the College. Every student of history knows what moral revolution this model teacher effected in the minds of his distinguished pupils among whom, Bengal is proud to reckon such good and moral men like Babu Ram Tonoo Lahiry, the late Rev. K. M. Banerjea, Ram Gopal Ghose, Rusik Kristo Mulik and others. Babu Koilash Chunder rightly said that, "under the guidance of Derozio, they laid the foundation of that solid learning and ability," and we should add, of that moral stamina "of which they made the best possible use in after-life." He carried them through the pages of Locke, Reid, and Stewart with consummate skill," so that—"he inoculated them, with large and liberal ideas." One day Ram Gopal, while reading Locke with Derozio, gave expression to a felicitous remark. "Locke," he said "has written his *Conduct of the Understanding*, with the head of an old man, but with the tongue of a child" meaning thereby that he had been able to express the highest truths of philosophy, in language which a child could understand." "Ram Gopal's highest studies within the College-walls were Locke's and Stewart's philosophy, Russel's *Modern Europe*, Shakespeare's plays, and the elements of Natural philosophy." And further more we learn from the same authority, that Ram Gopal was deficient in mathematics. This is the brief summary of his great scholastic career which afterwards blossomed forth in all its political and oratorical grandeur and beauty.

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## CHAPTER II.

## HIS MERCANTILE CAREER.

We are unfortunately left quite as much in the dark as to the interesting details of this part of his valuable life. Providence saved, however, the honor of the much maligned Bengalee race by having destined Ram Gopal to take to this noble profession which made him what he really was. And it was by pure accident that Ram Gopal, under Divine inspiration, was made to adopt this profession. It is said that a Jewish merchant by the name of Mr. Joseph "applied" to Mr. Anderson, of the Firm of Colvin & Co., for an intelligent young educated native as his assistant.

Mr. Anderson, therefore, asked Mr. David Hare to send one of his best pupils. The great philanthropist with a prophetic vision saw the future destiny of Ram Gopal and selected him as his nominee. The young nominee, scarcely seventeen years old, in the memorable year of 1832, we suppose, left the college and became a writer under Mr. Joseph on a salary perhaps of Rs. 40 per mensem. Possessed of gigantic intellectual powers, it is no wonder that Ram Gopal, within a very short time, mastered the routine duties of a mercantile office, and rose step by step, as he acquired useful knowledge and proved his moral and intellectual fitness. Within a short time, it is said, that one Mr. T. S. Kelsall joined Mr. Joseph as a partner, and Ram Gopal was appointed banian. The exact date of this important event in the life of Ram Gopal cannot now be ascertained. The Firm went on progressing under Ram Gopal's "judicious management" for some time, we cannot say how long, when the two partners separated, and another Firm was opened by Mr. Kelsall himself under whom Ram Gopal served as banian. He then became a partner to the Firm which assumed the name of Kelsall, Ghose & Co.

The exact dates of these events, we have not yet been able to ascertain. In this way Ram Gopal carried on his business with an immense fortune at his command till the year 1846 when he withdrew from the firm with more than 2 lacs of rupees. Some differences, however, arose between him and Mr. Kelsall in 1848 which rendered the continuance of their partnership no longer possible. How this bitter feeling was engendered, we do not know, but it seems, from some stray copies of private letters that are still to be found in the possession of his son-in-law, that Mr. Kelsall attributed dishonest motives, or carelessness to Ram Gopal in regard to certain sums of money lost to this Firm and hence this estrangement. We publish below the letter of Ram Gopal addressed to Mr. Kelsall which will partly explain our meaning.

To

*Calcutta July 17th 1848.*

T. S. KELSALL, Esq.

SIR,

The deep insult contained in your letter received on the 14th instant having been yet unrecalled, it is impossible for me any longer to retain your presents. I cannot use them ; it would be painful even to keep them. They were valuable only as tokens of regard and friendship. The gilt is now off, the charm is gone, and the things are reduced to their money value. It affords me therefore a great relief to return the worthless pelf. One word of explanation I must add.

In sending back the diamond ring I have no remark to make, for it is none the worse for wearing. I have had some scruples in returning the same, since it has been worn for several years. I would have readily, if permitted, handed you the original cost of the shawl in Rupees. After some hesitation I return the horse and the Atlas, as the former was a gift made jointly with your brother,



and the latter with your wife. But as these presents were essentially *yours*, I hope they will pardon my returning them.

I cannot resist the temptation of telling you a few parting words on this last occasion of my writing to you.

When I closed my business connexion with you long ago, you, sir, put a diamond ring on my finger as a token of friendship. The day that I signed the deed of dissolution you shook hands with me with tears in your eyes. It was you, sir, who then declared your belief that you never hoped to be again associated in partnership with one whose connexion should be marked with as much natural good feeling and sympathy as had ever subsisted between you and me. You requested me to see you as often as I could. You placed a room at my disposal whenever I might choose to have a resting place in town. Was it to a rogue, Mr. Thomas Siddon Kelsall, that you did all this? And when several months afterwards at your own invitation, Ram Gopal Ghose sat at your board and partook of your hospitality, was it a rogue, that you thus introduced to your family and friends? Was it a rogue, sir, I ask, on whom you respectfully called, 6 or 8 months ago, asking advice and assistance regarding your own business? Was it a rogue whom you offered your best thanks for discovering fraud and irregularities in your establishment? Did you, sir, seek the mediation of one who had robbed you to help you to make new arrangements for a Banian? Was it a rogue, sir, whose services you entreated not very many months ago to relieve you of your pecuniary wants? Was it a rogue, I emphatically ask, to whom you said between 4 and 5 months ago, that he had better come and resume his seat in office if he would but promise work? Was it one who had repeatedly abused your confidence that only 3 months ago you read extracts from your English letters containing what you said to be the pith of your home intelligence? Did he, sir, rob you who, at your solicitation, has repeatedly renewed your promissory notes, knowing as he did from your own statement, you are in difficulties? Was it only because you had a purpose to gain that you condescended to address a hardened robber only six weeks ago "My dear Ram Gopal"? This is the man, sir, whom you dared to write on the 14th July (alluding to sundry petty

accounts amounting to less than Rs. 5000) that you were perfectly satisfied that this was only another case of robbery to add to those you had before instanced. Shame ! Shame ! ten thousand times repeated shame !

Yours Sincerely,

RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

Having thus severed his connection with the Firm of Messrs. Kelsall, Ghose & Co., Ram Gopal set up an independent Firm of his own, perhaps in the latter end of the year 1848, under the name of R. G. Ghose & Co. His old friend, Mr. Anderson, helped him a great deal, and his nephew established a corresponding house in England through which he carried on a large business as an Agency House in Calcutta for English merchants. He opened besides a branch Firm at Akyab and engaged in a profitable trade with Arracan and Burmese rice and other goods.

His enterprize was then crowned with marvellous success, but the secret of that success lay in his thorough honesty of purpose and unflinching devotion to work. His words were believed as Gospel truths by the Mahajuns and other classes of people, for he would not break his promises under any circumstance. Babu Koilash Chunder Bose cites two instances only of his rectitude of purpose. No doubt, there were such innumerable instances in his commercial life, but the particulars of such noble examples of his valuable life are now almost forgotten.

Babu Koilash says, it was in the year 1847, that a terrible commercial crisis darkened the prospects of many Agency Houses in Calcutta, and ruined them. Ram Gopal "had drawn bills to a large extent on Houses in England, and was doubtful whether they would be honored at maturity. If dishonoured, he would be a ruined man. His friends therefore advised him to make a *benamée* of his vast property," which he sternly refused to do. He said, with his characteristic love of truth and honesty, that he would rather

part with everything he had, even the last cloth on his back, to pay his debts than to defraud his creditors by such mean trickeries. On another occasion, says Babu Koilash, a rich man lent him a loan of a lac of rupees without taking any security from him whatever. The creditor's friends admonished him for his doing so, but he coolly said that Ram Gopal would on no account break his promises, even if Heaven were to fall. Such in brief is a summary of his mercantile life, for we have not been able to collect facts to throw more light on the subject.

Amidst the arduous and difficult duties of his commercial life, he was as enthusiastic and persevering in his literary and oratorical culture as he had been while a student. In political agitation he was the foremost and the most worthy mouth-piece of the Hindu community. And in the field of Indian Journalism of his time he was its moving and guiding spirit. Such was his ardent and genuine love of literature that, when he was a mere clerk in Mr. Joseph's Firm, he used to come regularly, after the office hours, to the Hindu College and take exercise on dictation along with other boys under a distinguished teacher, Mr. G. F. Speede.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### HIS LITERARY AND POLITICAL CAREER.

Mr. Derozio, it is said, after his dismissal from the Hindu College for his so-called iconoclastic principles and views, established a Debating Club called the "Academic Institution," for the improvement of his pupils. This Club was to Ram Gopal what the "Oxford Club" has been to many an English orator. Here he learnt and practised the art of oratory in which he afterwards became a perfect master. Besides these, he and his other educated friends established an "Epistolary

Association," with a view to write good letters to each other and thereby acquire facility in writing.

" " There was another Society called "Society for the the Acquisition of General Knowledge" in which Ram Gopal and his friends read discourses on various political, social, and economic questions as will be apparent from his private letters published below. The exact dates when these Clubs and Societies were established cannot now be ascertained, but they must have sprung up between the year 1833 when the great English Orator, Mr. George Thompson came to this country, and the year 1838 from which period we have got his private letters. As these private letters have not yet been published by any body, we gladly make room for them in preference to other matters :—

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### HIS PRIVATE LETTERS.

*29th October 1833.*

My dear Rušik,

Mr. Anderson complained, on Sunday last, of your and his native friends in general visiting him very scarcely. He told me he had often written *chits* and torn them away, fearing that he might be considered to press invitation too often. Will you therefore go to him to-morrow evening, and ask Gobind Basack to go with us, as Mr. Anderson wishes to see him and asked me to take Gobind to his house one evening.

Mr. Joseph and Mr. Burgess will be invited by Mr. Anderson to meet you there.

Ever yours affectionately,

RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

*Calcutta 17th May 1834.*

My dear Gobind,

I have had the pleasure of receiving two or three letters from you, and as none of them have been acknowledged, you

will be disposed, I am afraid, to charge me with neglect and inattention. This, however, is not the case. Be assured that I am fully sensible of your extreme kindness towards me, which I have no claim upon for anything that I possess. The attachments of generous mind are always spontaneous and warm, till something positively offensive appears, which at once saps the foundation of friendship. You will find, I trust, ample explanation when I tell you that the lamented loss of my only child, my mother's continued illness, and my own indifferent health have combined to draw away my attention from the agreeable and profitable correspondence of my valued friends. But now let me notice a few particulars, which I have no doubt will be interesting to you.

You have, I presume, been already apprised of the progress that the new Society is making, yet I can not forbear giving you a brief account of this. I send you one of our circulars. The circular was issued to the senior students of all the principal seminaries as well as to the young students of the same. I understand that about 300 young men were assembled (on the 12th March). What a gratifying sight this must have been to all true friends of India ! What a circumstance of congratulation to us who were desirous of making a propitious beginning. But the proceedings were not quite so gratifying as one might wish. There was more talking than oratorical speaking. Two other good speeches were, nevertheless, made, which are so essential in attaching a due degree of importance to proceedings of this nature. The following officers were chosen on this occasion. President, Tara Chand (Sikdar), Vice-President Kala Chand Sett and myself, Secretaries Ram Tonoo Lahiry and Peary Chand Mitra, Treasurer Raj Kristo Miter. Committee Members are Krishna Mohun Banerjee, Rusik Lal Sen, Madhub Mulik, Peary Mohun Bose, Tariny Churn Banerjee, and Raj Krishna Dey. Madhub has since resigned his post. Many important points were overlooked at this general meeting owing to the want of

previous arrangement. Another observation that has been made to me by several is, that the leading few did all themselves without endeavouring to get all classes to take an active part in the matter. The result of this has been, as I gather from the report that a disaffection towards several is general amongst the members of the Society. This, however,, I hope and trust, will be healed up before long. In one of the meetings of the committee, I spoke rather warmly and perhaps harshly about the mismanagement of affairs. On this account, 2 or 3 members of the committee have, I suspect, been so seriously offended that I do not know, if it would not be for the interest of the Society for me to resign. But I shall take no such step without consulting some friends. Let me drop this unpleasant affair and proceed on.

We have secured the use of the Sanscrit College Hall for our monthly meetings, but they have placed no furniture, and lights at our disposal.. We shall therefore have to provide ourselves with these. We have imposed no compulsory contribution of any kind. But a voluntary subscription has been opened to raise funds. Let us have from you and other Roy Bahadour friends liberal remittances. The Rev. Mr. Norgate has given us Rs 50 through Krishna Mohun, (Banerjea) and another European calling himself a Friend to the Society has sent through me a donation of Rs 50. I should have told you that Mr. (David) Hare has been made the Honorary visitor of our Society. The first meeting took place last night (16th May 1838) and on the whole it was a gratifying one. It was a very dark night, and had been stormy and rainy in the evening, notwithstanding which a 100 young men were present—and heard with the utmost attention the discourse of the Rev. Krishna (Mohun Banerjea) “on the advantages of the study of history.” It was as remarkable for its chaste and elegant language as well for the varied information with which it was replete. The illustrations were apt and striking, and were chiefly drawn from ancient History.

THE PSEUDO PROTAP CHAND, A CLAIMANT TO THE  
THRONE OF THE BURDWAN RAJ.

I am very busy, otherwise I intended to send you a long account of the Culna massacre. The *soidisani* Protap Chand has proceeded up to Culna (now a sub-division in the district of Burdwan and a few miles off from Santipur on the banks of the Hoogly River) and created some disturbance. The Magistrate Mr. Ogilby on this applied to Government for orders, and he was instructed to apprehend the Rajah. So, down he proceeded to Culna at night on the 1st instant (1st May 1838) with a treasure escort that he met under the command of Captain Little. On the morning following, the troops were drawn up in a line on the bank, and as Protap Chand attempted to get away from his back in a *Pancy* (boat) the troops fired, and wounded several men, two of whom have since died. Protap is now in the Hoogly Jail. His followers and friends amounting to 300 people including some respectable men are in Burdwan jail. Mr. Shaw, the Attorney who accompanied him was also imprisoned, but he has been released on bail.

There is the greatest sensation created about this affair. The natives say that at the instigation of Poran Babu backed by his rupees, the Magistrate attempted to shoot poor Protap Chand and thus make an end of his dispute with the reigning power.

Babu Gobind Chundra Basak.

Yours affectionately  
RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

*Calcutta 21st September 1835.*

HIS IMPERFECT KNOWLEDGE OF HIS  
MOTHER-TONGUE.

My dear Gobind,

From the tenor of your letter, it appears to me that you lay too much stress on agitation. Too many cooks will spoil the broth. অনেক খন্যাসীতে গাজন নষ্টে. If you speak to a great number of people, you would have too much talk, too much fuss, and

too many proposals, and the result would be "great cry and no wool."

### OTHER TOPICS.

I am happy to find that your contribution to our Society is coming before long. Huro Chunder Ghose's topographical and statistical account of Bankura was read at the last meeting by Peary (Chand Miter). It contained a great deal of useful information, and indeed an interesting and instructive essay. May we be favoured with similar productions by all our educated young men now in the country! I perfectly agree with you in thinking that the main spring of all institutions is perseverance, a very small share of which unfortunately falls to my lot.

### THE EDITORSHIP OF GYANANASHUN.

Rusik (Kristo Mullick) is coming to Calcutta. Ram Tonoo (Lahiri) is gone home. Taruck the principal Editor of *Gyananashun* has been lucky enough to get a Deputy Collectorship at Hooghly. I wonder who will carry on the paper now.

Yours affectionately,  
RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

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*Calcutta 9th July 1837.*

My dear Gobind,

I am glad to hear you are come. I shall try to see you before long. Will you have to go back to Hoogly before you are finally settled here. I have a great deal to tell you about the *Gyananashun* which after this week will go into the hands of Babu Dukhina (Runjan Mukherjea).

This being the last time that I shall have to ask you to write in the *Gyananashun*, pray send me something good. You may pen a small article giving the particulars of Martin's conduct at Hoogly.

Yours &c,  
RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

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*Calcutta 12th August, 1838.*

My dear Gobind,

&c.

&c.

&c.

&c.

At the last meeting of our Society one discourse on commerce by Guru Churn Dutt (afterwards a Deputy-Magistrate of the 1st class) was read. It did not display much ability, though it certainly was creditable. Our friend Huro (Huro Chunder Ghose, afterwards a Judge of the Calcutta Small Cause Court) the Sudder Ameen (who has lately been transferred to Hoogly) will favour us with an account of Bankoora. Nothing can be more useful than collection of local information in this manner.

I am glad at the prospect of having your account of Chittagong at an early date. These kinds of communications will above all make our Society interesting in the eyes of Europeans.

A PROJECT FOR POLITICAL AGITATION IN ENGLAND WITH  
THE ASSISTANCE OF MR. ADAM.

While upon this subject I may as well tell you of the plans which I have lately been maturing in conjunction with Mr. Adam, or rather under his direction and advice. This gentleman, you are perhaps aware has gone to America with a view to join his family at Boston, and then go to England where he will probably be settled in London in connection with a press. I had several interviews with him previous to his departure, and his earnest proposal was that we might set about collecting information which should guide the public and public measures. This can be chiefly done by intelligent and active men like yourself who are placed in the mufasil. And our Government being so apathetic here, the best plan would be to transit this information to Mr. Adam in England, who would bring it prominently forward in the London Press, and arouse the attention of the English public to Indian subjects. When this is once effected, Mr. Adam seems determined to do all (if we but do our duty and keep him supplied with the necessary information) whether by writing in the papers, or by publishing pamphlets, or giving public discourses. When we bear in mind Mr. Adam's superior abilities, we can have little doubt of the result. I will mention a few of the sub-

jects on which it was thought desirable to collect new or more detailed information. The real state of the Police, and the means of improving it, the Abkari system, its uses and abuses, the causes of the absence of a spirit of enterprize in Bengal, and the means of reviving them, is population increasing or diminishing and what are the causes operating to produce either effect? Is wealth increasing or decreasing? Are the comforts of the great body of the people increasing or diminishing and what are the causes? Is the morality of the great body of the people improving or deteriorating in towns and in the country, amongst the Hindoos and the Mahomedans, and how far do the policy and measures of Government and the character and the institutions of the people contribute to the improvement or deterioration? What are the real effects of Missionary labours and in what light are they regarded by the people? This will be sufficient to give you an idea of what is meant to be done. Can the educated natives employ their leisure hours better than in carrying into effect this proposal? Mr. Adam will not lay the information before the English public as his own, but he will distinctly tell how and in what manner it comes to his hand. Petitions and public meetings do not produce their desired effects, only because it is known to be the doings of a few English agitators, but when they will see that the natives themselves are at work, seeking to be relieved from the grievances under which they labour, depend upon it, the attention of the British public and consequently of the Parliament will be awakened in such a manner that the reaction upon the local Government will be irresistible. We will then and not till then see active measures of amelioration put into operation. Need I say to convince you of the usefulness, nay the necessity of what is proposed to be done. &c. &c.

I think you will be very much disappointed, if you suppose that more time the leading members of our Society take, the better will be their productions. They are very idle and apathetic, (myself included) and I do not know if they will ever mend. Peary Mitter has been preparing himself, and will perhaps make his appearance before long. You wish to know if the Secretary wrote in the *Daily Intelligencer* under the signature of a member of the S. A. G. K. The first letter was mine, and the second I do not know whose.

The Academic is getting on very miserably, and I should not be surprized if in one of these days it be systematically abolished. What a pity it is that this old and cherished institution of our school-days should be thus suffered to die through the indifference of the mis-called educated natives.

Well then I will tell you that we formed an epistolary Association, i. e., writing letters to each other, and circulating them among the members. There is no limit to the nature of our subjects. Several good letters have already appeared, and the utmost freedom of discussion is allowed upon the merits of these epistles. May God bless you, my dear friend,

Ever yours affectionately,  
RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

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*Calcutta 16th December, 1838.*

My dear Gobind,

&c.

&c.

&c.

I have just received a letter from home communicating to me the news of my wife (second wife still living) having safely delivered a male child. When is your good lady going to bless you with a fruit as they say? Are you getting fat upon Chittagong fowls and Turkeys? &c &c.

Yours affectionately,  
RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

---

*Calcutta, 14th January 1839.*

My dear Gobind,

&c.

&c.

&c.

The epistolary Association may I think be revived, if a few of our friends will exert themselves. When I have more leisure on hand I shall see what can be done. At present I am very busy, having just taken up the business of another Liverpool House that was offered to me. You are right in saying that one of the pupils of the Medical College is destined for Chittagong. I must have misinformed you. The following 4 students have been examined and a very favorable report has been sent by the examiners to Lord Auckland.

Raj Kristo Dey, and Nobin Chundra Mitra, (both my neighbours whom you may have seen at my house) Dwarkanath Gupta, and Uma Churn Sett, (pupils of Rusik Kristo Mulik) are to be stationed at the 4 districts viz., Pabna, Moorshedabad, Dacca and Chittagong. But I am sorry to hear a report that these are not likely to take place as the Governor, Colonel Morrison is opposed to the interest of the Medical College and will thwart this plan if he can. &c. &c. &c.

Excuse me for this short and stupid letter. I am busy and not very well either. Be generous to,

Yours ever affectionately,  
RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

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*Calcutta 31st March 1839.*

My dear Gobind,

The last meeting of the A-A. (Academic Association) was held yesterday night, and we fortunately had a discussion which took place after three successive meetings having failed. The attendance was thin, and the speaking very ordinary. I have little hope of the revival of the palmy days of this Association.

The first anniversary meeting of the S. A. G. K. was held this month, and the proceedings altogether were satisfactory and encouraging. &c &c &c.

In about two months, another examination of the Medical College pupils is likely to take place, when a number of them will no doubt be declared qualified to practise. Of the 5 young men who have passed through the ordeal, 2 or 3 are about to go to the upper Provinces, where they will await the orders of the Governor-General.

The private examination of the Hindu College is not yet quite concluded. This is a great drawback to the progress of this very interesting institution. The day of the public examination will be one of considerable amusement. In the morning the Town Hall will be thronged by hundreds of young ladies

with gay dresses, and the senior classes will be examined on general subjects ; and, in the evening the frontage of the College will exhibit a brilliant display of fire-works. Here then is to be a new feature in the College examination, viz., there is to be no recitations or acting as in former years.

I do not know if I informed you in my last that I have given order for building an iron steam-boat. It is now being built at Kashipore by an experienced European. I expect it will be completed in 3 or 4 months. I will of course let it, when I do not want it for my use. After this I may probably some day take a trip to Chittagong to do myself the pleasure of squeezing you by the hand.

&amp;c.

&amp;c.

Yours affectionately,  
RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

8 miles to the North of Calcutta,

16th June 1839,

SUNDAY.

My dear Gobind,

Here am I at a beautiful place on the banks of the River in the company of sweet Tonoo (Babu Ram Tonoo Lahiry) and "removed from busy life's bewildered ways." Turton, Dr. Bromby, and Mr. Smith of the Sudder Court and other bigwigs have occupied this garden before, and it is well-known under the name of the *Kamarhatti Groves*. Since the beginning of last month I have had bad health, though not actually laid up, and I came down here last night in the hope of improving my health by a fortnight's stay, though I must arrange to attend my office from to-morrow, &c. &c. &c.

Ever Yours affectionately  
RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

Calcutta, 24th November, 1839.

My dear Gobind,

Last night I had the pleasure to receive your few lines of the 11th instant, in which you very justly complain of my prolonged silence. I do not know how to excuse myself. I have certainly been overhead with business, and have not been very well either for the last 2 months, having been troubled with that very obstinate disease, the pile. I have also had the misfortune lately to loose a young sister of mine. But notwithstanding all these palliative circumstances I should have found time to reply to the letters of one whose correspondence and friendship are, I can sincerely assure you, highly esteemed. But I hope to be more regular in future and make amends for the past.

&c

&c

&c.

In the last meeting of the S. A. G. K, ( Society for the acquisition of general knowledge ) our friend Peary Chand Miter produced the first portion of his History of India. It was a very admirable paper. It was well written, and shewed that he had been at great pains to collect information. In the November meeting, the second portion was read which sustained the reputation he had already won. He will continue to favour the Society with a great many more numbers before his subject comes to a conclusion. I am sorry to say that the attendance is not quite so full as it used to be. I am afraid we may have another instance of the temporary zeal of the so-called educated natives in the approaching decline of this society.

#### A GLIMPSE OF HIS MERCANTILE LIFE.

All our friends are quite well. Babu Kalachand, (Sett) Tara Chand, ( Chuckerbuty ) Peary ( Chand Mitter ) Russik (Krishna Mulik), Madhub Chundra Mullik, his nephew Bhola Nath have all turned their attention to trading. And I am very happy to say, some of them have made very fair profits. I am also thankful to say that *my own trading operations with England have been very successful.* ( The Italics are ours ). Should I be equally successful for 2 or 3 years more, I will give up the business of my

employer, and become an independant merchant—an honourable profession, the prospect of which thrills me with delight.

#### CORRESPONDENCE WITH Mr. W. ADAM.

I have lately received a kind letter from Mr. W. Adam who is now living at Boston with his family. He sent me an United States Periodical containing a characteristic article from his pen, defending the character and labors of Ram Mohun Roy from the attacks of a missionary traveller Mr. Malcolm. I hope to carry on a regular correspondence with him.

#### GYANANASHUN NEWSPAPER AND ITS EDITORIAL MANAGEMENT.

I should mention to you before I conclude that at a meeting of a few select friends lately held in my house at the request of Babu Ram Chunder Miter, and Horo Mohun Chatterjea the present conductors of the *Gyananashun*, to take into consideration different points connected with the management of that paper. I was requested to take up the editorial management of it. I have not yet acceded to the proposal, and I think, there are weighty reasons for declining it. I have little leisure and less ability to conduct it, and the consequence is, I will feel it to be a great bore. And unless it can be better managed than it is at present, it is not worth while to take it up. But after all, should the paper devolve upon my hands, you may be sure to be constantly bothered by me for contributions. In fact it is the hope of being largely supplied with news by you that sometimes induces me to change my mind. And I am quite sure that I have no mufusil correspondent who will more ably and more cheerfully respond to my call.

Ever Yours affectionately

RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

Babu Gobind Chuuder Basak

Deputy Collector

Sultanpur, Chittagong.

## PROJECT FOR A NATIVE NEWSPAPER.

Calcutta, 10th January, 1842.

M<sup>r</sup> dear Gobind,

&amp;c.

&amp;c.

&amp;c.

The necessity of establishing a paper I had long been convinced of, and I have never failed to agitate the subject on all suitable occasions, and when I heard of the extinction of the *Durpan*, I have viewed it in the same light as you have done, and after much discussion, we have now come to a satisfactory conclusion. On last Tuesday evening the 7th, Tara Chand, (Chuckerburty) Peary, (Chand Miter), myself met Mr Krishna's, (Rev K. M. Banerjee's) and we resolved upon establishing a monthly Magazine in Bengalee and English, and also the *Durpan* in case the receipts on account of the latter will enable us to employ a competent person versed in English and Bengalee to undertake the translations of both the papers. This important duty no one seems willing to undertake and unless we can secure an intelligent young man to devote all his time which would perhaps cost us Rs 100. We can not venture to take up two Papers. And in my humble opinion they are both, under present circumstance, equally necessary. The magazine is to keep up a spirit of enquiry amongst the educated natives, to revive their dying institutions such as the Library, the Society for A. G. K. (acquisition of general knowledge), to arouse them from their lethargic state, to discuss such subjects as Female Education, the re-marriage of Hindoo widows &c. It is in short to be our *peculiar organ*. The *Durpan* on the other hand is for the native community in general, to be easy and simple in its style not to run into any lengthened discussion of any subject—to avoid abstract questions, to be extremely cautious of awaking the prejudices of the orthodox, to give items of news likely to be interesting to the native community, and gradually to extend their information, quietly to purge them of their prejudices, and open their minds to the enlightenment of knowledge and civilization. It should make the extinct *Durpan* its model. The two objects of the two papers are quite distinct, and though I have very inadequately expressed myself, you will perceive the difference, and I think you will concur with me as to the wisdom of the plan I have proposed.



The Magazine is to appear, if possible, on the 1st proximo. Krishna, Tara Chand, and Peary are to be regular contributors. They are pledged each of them to give one article, each number. Tara Chand will also look over the articles generally, and I am to be the puppet show of an Editor, and probably an occasional scribbler. I do not think we could make a better arrangement. But unimportant as my share is in a literary point of view, it must occupy a good deal of my time and attention, and I feel assured that unless I am relieved in the course of 5 or 6 months by Rusik (Rusik Krishna Mullik) coming here as he has talked of doing it, I will have to give it up. With this conviction you will think it strange and perhaps wrong in me to undertake what I have done. Be assured I have been compelled to do so, as no one else would catch the *mows*, and I have thought it worth our while to have some discussion or agitation among our class, even though it should be for a short period. It will be a shame indeed to have to give it up after a short career, and this crisis may infuse some decision into Rusik's mind. Would to God it may.

#### A PROJECT FOR A TOWN HALL IN THE NATIVE QUARTER.

For some days past I have been thinking of another public object. A Town Hall in the native part of the Town, where we might hold our meeting, and place our libraries, our pictures, and statues. We are yearly growing to be an important class. We shall, we hope, have subjects peculiarly native to discuss frequently in public. Such, for instance, as petitioning government. I have made an estimate, and find the cost to be nearly 20,000. The question is how are we to get up so large an amount. What do you think of this project?

Yours affectionately  
RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

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*Calcutta 26th July 1843.*

My dear Gobind,

I have been encouraged by our mutual friend Shyama Churn (Sirkar,) to write to you. I know how much I am to blame, and

I shrink from meeting you again on the field of correspondence, but I am assured of forgiveness, and have therefore determined to make a new opening with you, without, however, promising to be a regular customer in the exchange of epistles.

I enclose to you a printed series of questions by our Society, to which we shall all expect ample replies from you. The Society, however, is almost dying. Two of the committee men have seceded, Mr Remfrey, and Mr. Crow; and there is a feeling that it will not and can not work—the worst symptom of a fatal disease in such public institutions.

#### LORD ELLENBOROUGH.

For the first time I saw Lord Ellenborough the night before last at Barrackpur when a grand Ball and supper was given by the officers of the station in his honor. I was on the whole disappointed. There is nothing characteristically noble, great, or good in his features. He looks like a chafed lion, hampered and worn out.

Though more slovenly dressed than any gentleman in the Hall, yet you could discern in his suits and gestures that, he was once a voluptuary. There may be intellect and brilliancy about him, but there is neither dignity nor the impressiveness of high principles. His speeches were good,—very good as far as fluency and choice of words went, but there was bad taste and worse principles. There was a degree of egotism, and inflated vanity that would not go down with any class except the Army over which he puts forth his protecting wings. There was a stir amongst the company which was not becoming in their servant, (?) but worst of all was the principle he advocated in these words—"By the sword, we have won it, (India) and by the sword we shall keep it." At the conclusion of every sentence, there was tremendous cheering, but remember three-fourths of the company present were Military officers.

&amp;c

&amp;c

&amp;c.

You might have heard that my senior partner goes to England on the 10th proximo, and I shall then have a good deal more to do, and the whole of the responsibility will rest on my shoulders.

Babu

GOBIND CHUNDRA BASAK.

Midnapore.

Yours affectionately

RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

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*Calcutta 20th May 1844.*

My dear Gobind,

&c

&c

I find by the Papers just received from England that Mr. Sullivan had presented an address to the Court of Proprietors regarding the employment of natives in the Civil administration of the country. No decision has yet taken place.

Yours affectionately

RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

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*Calcutta 22nd June 1844.*

My dear Gobind,

&c

&c.

You will be glad to hear there is a subscription on foot, called "The Hare Prize Fund". The plan is, if we get at least Rs. 4,000, we invest the amount in Government Security, or some other nearly as safe investment and more profitable. The proceeds to be applied as prize for the best vernacular essays or works. The subjects to be chosen by a committee, and the merits of the production to be decided by them. If the amount does not reach Rs. 4,000, the thing will be dropped, as any thing that is not permanent, should not be mixed with the name of David Hare, &c. Much talk of Ellenborough's recall

Your sincerely, in haste,

RAM GOPAL GHOSE.

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## CHAPTER V.

## COPIES FROM HIS DIARY.

*Calcutta 28th December, 1839.*

The year is now drawing to a close, and I am purporting to review the journal which I have kept during the greater part of the present year. I find that it is pretty regularly kept up from 1st April 1839. On the 1st January 1839, the Social meeting of some my nearest and dearest friends took place at my house, and after dinner we got up and made speeches. I recollect, Hury, and Ram Tonoo Lahiry spoke on the occasion. This speechifying propensity infected me, and I knew, one thing that I urged in my speech was the importance of keeping a journal. I have subsequently been confirmed in this opinion by observing this system of watching time producing on the character of two of England's best men, I allude to William Roscoe of Liverpool, and William Wilberforce, the emancipator of West Indian slaves, whose life is written by their respective sons, I have lately been reading. May God enable me to profit by the example of these two illustrious individuals!

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*January 26th.*—Rose at half-past seven. Read newspaper, refusing *Sowgad* from a *Durwan* and *Jamadar* who expected employment.

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*February 3rd.*—Talked with Mohesh with whom, I had a pleasant drive. Grish, Hury, Raj Krishna, Sham, Ramtonoo, Gobind, Doorgadas, Mohesh came. It was a pleasant party till mid night. Read Chatnam's celebrated speech about the American war.

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*April 3rd.*—I read some correspondence between Dr. Robertson Hume, and Gibbon the illustrious Triumvirate of contemporaneous historians. The former seems to be held in the highest admiration. I felt strong response to Gibbon's love of retired life.

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*27th April 1839.*—The establishment of a *Patshalla* near the Hindoo College upon European principles. Mr. Hare shewed us a plan, and a list of subscription to which I had made up my mind to put down Rs. 50 which Mr. Hare did not seem to like.

4th June 1839.—Read an eloquent, learned and interesting article from Blackwood's Magazine. It was the review of Dr. Arnold's History of Rome. Some idea might be derived from the review in question as to the importance of the study of the History of Rome.

14th June 1839.—At 5 o'clock came down to the College to see the foundation stone of the *Patshala* laid by David Hare. One stone was made fast on the ground by masonry in which a hole was based. In it a glass bottle, stoppered and sealed, was deposited containing the newspapers of the day, and as I was told the modern coins. Above were two copper plates one of which was inscribed in English and the other in Bengalee, giving the date and particulars of the *Patshala* with the names of those who formed the College Committee, and it was further added that the stone was laid by David Hare Esq.—an old and respectable citizen of the Metropolis with a few lines of well-deserved eulogium on this philanthropic individual. After the ceremony of laying the stone was over, Mr. Hare addressed those who were assembled around him congratulating the public on the formation of this useful institution, but he was not audible, his voice being choked by the feeling that was uppermost in him. He was followed by Sir Edward Ryan who explained the object of the institution, laying great stress on the value of vernacular education, and concluding by a tribute of applause to David Hare. Prasunna Kumar Tagore spoke in Bengalee, and explaining the object of the *Patshalla*, and dwelling on the public good which was likely to result from it. He spoke good Bengalee, and acquitted himself very creditably, considering he was quite unprepared for the task. I was strongly reminded the whole of this evening, of Mr. Adam's views of education, and of his enthusiastic advocacy of the vernacular system. I wish he had been here to witness the change that is coming round.

An unknown writer published a memoir, and speeches of Ram Gopal in 1871 from which we glean the following :

"He found time also to write in the *Gyananeshan*,—a then existing diglot, a series of articles signed "Civis" on the Indian Transit

Duties. Subsequently he took on himself the editorship of the Paper, —and when it ceased to live, he started another called the Spectator. In 1833 George Thompson came out to India. He was a man whose views and sentiments were in perfect accordance with those of Ram Gopal, and they conjointly founded the British Indian Society,—a Society where the social, especially the political improvement of India formed the chief topic of discourse.

In the year 1848 or 1849, we do not know exactly, he was offered the second Judgeship of the Calcutta Court of Small Causes, but he resolved, as he said “not to eat the Company’s salt.” He therefore respectfully declined the offer.

Ram Gopal was in every sense a public man. There was hardly any institution, educational, commercial, or political with which his name has not been inseparably associated. He was a very active member of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce,—a Fellow of the Calcutta University, and a member of the British Indian Association, the Agri-Horticultural Society, and the District Charitable Society. To crown all, he was elected in the year 1861, a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, but owing to failing health he greatly disappointed the hopes entertained of his career in the Council by his countrymen. His physical ailments subsequently increased, and he died on the 25th of January 1868 of a lingering fever attended by a wasting cough.

Ram Gopal took the greatest interest in the education of his countrymen. “In fact” says Dr. Mouat, late Secretary to the Council of Education “I can look back upon no part of my early career in connection with education which is not associated with him.” (Ram Gopal.) “The subject of our memoir,” says a writer in the Calcutta Review, (meaning Ram Gopal Ghose) “indited several elaborate and valuable minutes showing the defects of the principal educational institutions.”

When the Bethune Female School was first opened, and none came forward to risk the social obloquy consequent upon sending a native girl to a public school, Ram Gopal was the first man who broke through all trammels of social fear, and got his daughter ad-

mitted into the institution. In the grand movement for promoting the consummation of widow-marriage by the natives of Bengal, he also took the greatest interest.

But the most eminent services done by Ram Gopal to his country were on some of the occasions on which he delivered his memorable speeches. His oratorical abilities were not of an ordinary description, and extorted admiration from persons whose mother-tongue was the language in which he spoke. At the meeting of the inhabitants of Calcutta for doing honour to Lord Hardinge, he carried his proposition of erecting a statue of the Governor-General against the three eloquent barristers of the time, viz., Messrs. "Turton, Dickens, and Hume." The next day the *John Bull*—a periodical of the day "made the startling announcement that a young Bengalee orator had floored three English barristers," and called him "the Indian Demosthenes." His speech on the Charter Act meeting was lauded by the *Times* as a "master-piece of oratory." Mr. Hume, Editor of the *Indian Field* highly praised his speech on the occasion of the Queen's proclamation, and remarked that, if Ram Gopal had been an Englishman, he would have been knighted by the Queen. For his celebrated speech on the burning-ghat question, he will ever be held in grateful remembrance by the Hindu community at large, as it saved them from Municipal oppression in what according to their belief, concerned their most sacred interests. Fervent were the blessings pronounced over him with heartfelt gratitude by many an old Hindu for the signal triumph he achieved over the Government on that memorable occasion."

## CHAPTER VI.

### SPECIMENS OF HIS PUBLIC SPEECHES. .

Impossible as it is for us to reproduce here all the celebrated speeches he delivered on various momentous occasions, we remain content with making some random extracts from the collection of his speeches published by Babu Deno Nath Bhunja of Calcutta, in 1871. To notice them all, and criticize them in detail requires a separate volume, and does not lie within

the scope of this compressed biography. Ram Gopal was a distinguished orator of his time, but he never made any display of his oratory, except on rare immergent occasions, when the best interests of the nation of which he was a foremost representative, required it. It is the noblest function of an orator to represent the grievances and wants of the suffering humanity, and that heavenly function, Ram Gopal has gloriously performed, and achieved an imperishable renown.

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#### HIS SPEECHES ON THE BURNING-GHAT QUESTION.

"Personally I have the highest respect for the present Lieutenant-Governor, and I believe if he were aware how very objectionable is the proposed order in a Hindu point of view, how wounding and exasperating it must be to all who believe in the sanctity of the holy river, he would be far from wishing to enforce that order. As for myself, Sir, I care not where my body may be burned after death, but I consider it my duty to stand up here, on behalf of the vast majority of my countrymen, who would feel it to be a dire calamity, if the prospect, so reverentially contemplated, of their bodies being disposed of on the banks of the Hoogly were lost to them.

It was only this morning, Sir, that two aged Brahmins came to me, and asked me if it were really true that Government were about to prohibit the burning of the dead on the banks of the *Gunga*. I told them in reply that the Government had passed such an order, and you English gentlemen, can scarcely realize the effect which this, to them astounding announcement, produced. One of them shook from head to foot, breathing heavily; the other fell tottering on a chair, and his eyes were bedimmed with tears. Such, Gentlemen, are the feelings which the natives have on this subject, a subject which to them has an interest beyond this world. Is it just, I ask to wound those feelings? Is it right to sow the seeds of discontent among a vast body of unoffending peaceful subjects? Is it policy, is it toleration to pursue such a course? And yet this is proposed to be done without even making out a case. As to the argument that the burning of dead bodies on the banks of the river



directly leads to the throwing of corpses into the Hoogly, it is illogical."

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HIS SPEECH ON THE MEMORIAL OF SIR HENRY  
HARDINGE, THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL  
OF INDIA.

A large meeting of the Inhabitants of Calcutta assembled at the Town Hall on the 24th December, 1847 to take into consideration the propriety of presenting an address to the Governor-General upon the occasion of his departure from India, and also for the purpose of obtaining some personal memorial to commemorate his eminent services to the Empire.—

The address being read, the Reverend K. M. Bannerjea proposed to add to it a few more lines distinctly indicative of the gratitude of the native community for the interest which the Governor-General had ever taken in the cause of their education. The proposed amendment elicited a warm discussion in which Messrs. Turton, Hume, and Colville on one side, and Revd. K. M. Banerjea, and Babu Ram Gopal Ghose on the other, took the most prominent part.

Babu Ram Gopal said :—

Gentlemen, I regret that there should be a discussion upon the merits of the address. I, for one, think that in an address from the inhabitants of Calcutta, the want of any prominent allusion to the conduct of Lord Hardinge as the friend of native Education is an omission which I cannot but regret. This difference of opinion might have been avoided, if the heads of the native community—by far the larger portion of the inhabitants—had been consulted in an address of this description. I am however willing to admit that the time has been too limited for taking the proper steps. If the addition proposed cannot be appended as it stands—at all events, some plan may be adopted whereby we shall be enabled to put matters in their true light, so that Lord Hardinge may see that the character he maintained as the friend of education endears him in the eyes of the nation as the best friend of their interests. We all feel that in extending the blessings of the British Government, the prosperity and

the happiness of the people are greatly enhanced. It is all very well to say that in the comprehensive word "peace-making" every thing is included, but is it meant to assert that the great causes of the advancement of civilization, the education of the people, the improvement of roads and the opening of canals are to sink into insignificance? Brevity may be the soul of wit, but you attempt to screw it down in this instance ;—it will not do. (Hear, hear.) Lord Hardinge expressed a glowing desire for the advancement of education among the native population, and the feelings he expressed made a deep impression upon me. From that moment I have felt a deep-rooted esteem for the Governor-General, and would be very sorry if no allusion be made to Lord Hardinge as the friend and patron of native education.

*The proposal was carried.*

Then with regard to the personal memorial to commemorate the services of Lord Hardinge, Sir Thomas Turton proposed the Resolution of obtaining a service of plate for Lord Hardinge himself, and portrait of him for the Town Hall.

Babu Ram Gopal rose and said :—

Gentlemen, once more I come forward to object to the Resolution proposed. It is not for me to say that a better Governor-General than Lord Hardinge never came to India, but upon this we are all agreed, that he was a good Governor-General, and therefore we cannot come forward with anything less than a statue. If there is any thing else, surely the munificent example of the Bishop of Calcutta\* should embolden us to come forward with a statue. And surely a mere piece of plate and a picture are not enough.

Mr. Turton.—A service of plate.

R. G. Ghose.—Be it so—a service of plate is not sufficient. Would that I had a purse as long as that of the Raja of Burdwan, I would certainly not be backward in putting down a good round sum towards the erection of a statue. Gentlemen, Sir Thomas Turton has alluded to the Sutej Column, but I cannot see that there is any

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\*Bishop Wilson had subscribed a large sum for the commemoration of the services of Lord Hardinge.

connection between that and the memorial under discussion. The Sutaj Column is a tribute of esteem paid to the Governor-General by his Honorable Masters, but what has that to do with the affection, the respect, and the gratitude of the Community—feelings which it would be paltry to attempt to express by anything less than a statue to the memory of our benefactor.

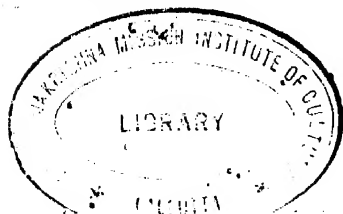
*Colonel Ramsay seconded the motion and it was carried.*

To this speech is attributed the beautiful Equestrian Statue of Lord Hardinge which graces the *mailan* of Fort William.

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### AN ANECDOTE.

It was in the year 1850, Ram Gopal and Sir Frederick Halliday, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal went to Krishnaghur to distribute prizes to the students of the local College. During the Lieutenant-Governor's stay, Mr. Browne, the Civil and Sessions Judge of Nuddea, asked both of them to a public dinner, but Ram Gopal was not present at the dinner. Sir Frederick anxiously enquired about the reason of his not coming. Ram Gopal felt a delicacy in the matter, and said that he could not come as he had made a previous engagement with his esteemed friend, Babu Ram Tonoo Lahiry. But that was not the real reason. Mr. Browne was said to be a rough sort of hot-tempered John Bull. He used to snatch away poor carpenters' tools when they worked under him, and maltreated them and other poor mechanics of the town. This Ram Gopal had heard from his friend, and told Sir Frederick afterwards, that his real reason was, that Mr. Browne maltreated his poor countrymen. Babu Ram Tonoo Lahiry of Krishnaghur is our authority on the subject.




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FINIS.















